Press Clippings

FOR

CARE AREA

From: start

To: August 15, 1986

Riverside, CA
(Riverside Co.)
Press Enterprise
(Clr. D. 125,053)

AUG 9 1986

Allen's P. C. B Est. 1888

'Rare Area' is a rare theatrical treat that viewers won't forget

By T. E. FOREMAN
The Press-Enterprise

Should a critic state, as this critic is about to do, that "Rare Area" is one of the most remarkable theater offerings ever presented on a Los Angeles stage, he or she then faces the likelihood that readers will then want him or her to describe it.

And "Rare Area," at the James A. Doolittle Theatre in Hollywood, just about defies description, at least in ordinary theater terms.

It uses two singers, but it is not a musical show. It has an actor, but it is not a play by any means. It has a mime artist, but it is not a mime show.

What is it, then? It might be simplest to quote from the program notes:

"Rare Area' is a stream of images and events that flow from the stage, bombarding and delighting the audience in a wash of color, light, song, movement, character and music."

The show's creator, George Coates, says, "We are dealing with the languages of color, the languages of music, of form and movement, and of human emotive languages — not only the languages of words. The inhabitants of 'Rare Area' exemplify contending archetypes of power — political, spiritual and personal power. Their interactions, alliances and detentes are enacted visually and musically."

Does that make it all clear? One fears it doesn't.

Well, one of the main things you experience in "Rare Area" is a stage where some really amazing, dazzling, astounding visual effects are achieved through a combination of scenic projections and lighting. One moment people appear to be sitting on the steps of an ancient temple, another moment in a huge cavern, another moment in outer space and in any number of other settings.

Within those settings, a tenor and a soprano sing, wordlessly; a mime artist mimes and an actor makes occasional disparaging, frequently humorous remarks about the proceedings, or tries to put an end to them with a gun.

Musical accompaniment comes from an orchestra of woodwinds, guitar, harp and keyboards, which at times appears to be floating 15 feet over the stage.

At one point the tenor sings while suspended upside down. At another the mime artist, aided by aerial rigging, performs some acrobatic flying maneuvers over the stage. There is a sequence with flags and staffs, illuminated with multi-colored lights, and there is a constant succession of other striking effects.

Whether or not there is any message to all this, any underlying meaning, is a matter of one person's opinion being as good as another. Ask any five people what it was all about and you would probably get five different answers.

But it isn't necessary to look for meaning or message. You can simply enjoy the whole thing as a marvelous visual and auditory experience.

The production has John Duykers and an Indian named White Eagle alternating as tenors and Kathryn Neale, Kathy Knight and the single-named Fabienne alternating as sopranos. Sean Kilcoyne plays the actor and Hitomi Ikuma the mime artist at all performances. Duykers and Neal displayed splendid operatic voices, along with an ability to sing under trying conditions, in the opening night show.

Coates conceived and directed the production. The original and interesting music is by Mark Ream and the phenomenal set designs and scenic projections by Jerome Sirlin.

"Rare Area" is scheduled through Aug. 24 at the Doolittle, with a possibility of being extended.

It's guaranteed to be a theater experience you won't forget.

Theater Review

"Rare Area"

James A. Doolittle Theatre, 1615 N. Vine St., Hollywood. Wednesday and Thursday at 8 p.m., Friday and Saturday at 8 and 10 p.m., Sunday at 3 and 8 p.m. through Aug. 24. $12 to $22. (714) 634-1300 or (213) 410-1062.

The Courier Aug. 8, 1986

Blackwell's People

by Mr. Blackwell

"WHAT'S NEW"...HOW IS THE WORLD TREATING YOU?...

Although that's the name of a song, it really applies to our lives...so much is happening and so many things are changing, we find our lives turning around in mad and sometimes wonderful whirlwinds....

TO BEGIN...

I had two new theatre experiences unlike any two evenings I have ever spent....Let's start with the Mark Taper Forum....The show is called... "Asingmali"...which tells the story of five men in South Africa...and their tears and fears and occasional joys but mostly the terrible turmoil in their lives....The style of theatre is new and brilliant....I left the theatre, although more informed about their problems, feeling very depressed.

It is possible that as we gain years, we are incapable of spreading and sharing our emotions as frivolously as we once did...although we felt for their turmoil, it was a suffering lesson for the evening...Gordon Davidson is again brilliant in his ability in bringing new and exciting concepts to us, but I only wish at times I could leave feeling more excited about the joy of the evening and not the suffering....

AND THEN

Take from it what you will...find in this show that which reaches you and take from it the emotional values that will make your mind take flight on the wings of fantasy....Never knowing what "Rare Area" was supposed to say, I felt an insight and a certain calm from the highly electric presentation at the James A. Doolittle Theatre....Possibly the most creative lighting and staging that I have ever seen....Although all talents were forward 200 years and brilliant...especially Hitomi Ikuma...a mime artist who had us spellbound...I felt that the lighting, staging and music were so intensely sensitive that our most innermost emotions had a chance to soar to new and greater heights...at times there were moments we felt like we had soared into another planet and found ourselves crying loudly to be heard....I can't tell you what it was supposed to say, but I can tell you that it permits you to use it for whatever values you have need for at the moment...from your deepest emotions to your most erotic fantasies....

OFF TO THE CITY BY THE BAY...

Appearing on the A.M. Show in San Francisco, I found it has a brand new format and style....Hosts Fred Lacoste and Terry Lowry are more than brilliant in their infinitely human newsmaker interviews....For once there is conversation and little oration....They have adopted the magazine format, but somehow this is one magazine we want to read....If big time syndication doesn't spot these two...I'll have missed my guess....

THEN BACK TO THE HOTEL...

The Fairmont Hotel...high on windy Nob Hill, is quickly refurbishing its entire house.... The rooms have become bright and cheerful and not nearly as majestic as the lobby itself...but a wonderful relief for those treasured moments spent reviving yourself to venture into this wondrous city....We passed the Venetian Room and spotted...— "Charles Pierce" on the marquee....Well, with a little pull we managed great seats for dinner and show, to a packed and excited audience....Charles is an absolute actor and those he imitates could well learn about themselves from him....Joan Collins stole the show, leaving Bette Davis in an absolute rage, and trailing far behind was Carol Channing....We actually, through this genius impersonator, spent our evening with these stars....The hotel will be completely redone by '88 but even at the moment is like a visit to Buckingham Palace...absolutely gorgeous....

HOWEVER...

After all the excitement of T.V., Charles, and the skyrocketing

(continued to page 29)

DAILY VARIETY DAILY

Thurs., Aug. 7, 1986

Just for Variety

By ARMY ARCHERD

GOOD MORNING: The best-laid plans of — dogs and men, oft go oversked — even on a G-rated film. "Benji The Hunted" is "the most difficult picture we've ever attempted," says director Joe Camp from the Yachats, Ore., location. The pic, originally skedded for 72 days, will now go 90. "But," adds producer Ben Vaughn, "we are getting some tremendous stuff." There are only three minor people roles in the pic, played by country singer Red Stegall, KGW-TV newscaster Nancy Francis, and Frank Inn, Benji's trainer. "Teaching Benji to act was a snap compared to teaching cougars, bears, wolves — and an eagle," says Camp. "But the footage is sensational and my hopes for the picture becoming a genre classic are realizing right before my eyes." One sequence was filmed atop a flower-covered mountain with clear views of Mt. Hood, Adams, Rainier and St. Helens. The company was 'coptered to the mountain top each day. "This type of picture has never been done before," promises Camp, who credits trainer Steve Martin — and, of course, Benji and Frank Inn — for making it happen. Mulberry Square has another feature, "Tracker," a western with people, that is, plotted for '87 . . . Bernie Brillstein, who, with Marsha Mason, is developing Linda Ellerbee's "And So It Goes" for the bigscreen, has also optioned the Diane Arbus biog, by Patricia Bosworth (Knopf), and will try to get Debra Winger to portray the photog. The busy Mr. B. also made the deal for Jim Henson's "Fraggle Rock" to play NBC Sat. ayems.

* * *

Barbra Streisand taped new intros for two of her 1966 spex, "My Name Is Barbra" and "Color Me Barbra," for CBS/Fox' video releases. Streisand will be seen — and heard — "live" for the first time in six years when she sings at a Demo campaign fund-raiser for seven senatorial candidates, Sept. 6. The tab will be $5000 per couple to hear Streisand sing; the site may be her home. The Hollywood Women's Political Committee sponsors. Robin Williams guestars with Streisand, who says, "I feel I must sing again (in public) to raise money so that we send people to Washington who will solve problems, not create them" . . . Cannon has given Charlie Matthau a go-ahead for Oct. 15 start on "Doing Time On Planet Earth," a comedy sci-fi'er by UCLA cinema grad Darrin Star. Matthau's a USCinema alumnus and is joined by fellow grad Richard Connor. Matthau will direct. No, there will not be a guesting by papa Walter . . . And second generation: stuntman Greg Barnett (longtime stuntman-double for Bob Wagner) happily notes that his son, five-year-old Jeffrey (Wagner's godchild) starts his stunt career in "No Safe Haven," for stuntman R.A. Rondell, son of a Stunts Unlimited Founder, Ronnie R., who is directing the Vanguard film . . . Longtime tv, commercial and second-unit director Paul Baxley launches his bigscreen career with "Free Enterprise" for Summit Enterprises . . . Joe Wizan, in postproduction at Touchstone with the Kirk Douglas, Burt Lancaster big-screen'er, "Tough Guys," is now set by Disney to produce "Sunday Drive" for their "Sunday Movie" ABC series.

* * *

"Picnic," which recently played the Ahmanson, will be filmed by Showtime. The returning cast includes Dick Van Patten, Rue McClanahan, Michael Learned, Gregory Harrison and Dana Hill . . . Tony-winning choreo Michael Peters (who also did the Liberty Weekend extravaganza) teaches a master dance class at the Dupree Dance Acad tomorrow — as thanks to Roland Dupree, who first recognized his talents — gave him free use of the Acad for his workshop . . . Scott Bakula, of the original L.A. "Nite Club Confidential" cast, returns Aug. 13-17, before starting his starring role in Par's "Gung Ho" series. . . . On hand at the Doolittle for the very visual "Rare Area" were Hollywood's film and art celebs, including Esther Williams, Dorothy McGuire, Alexis Smith, Jack Carter (he's an excellent caricaturist), Robert Graham, Peter Alexander, Nancy Romero, etc. . . . Instead of the traditional expensive trinkets to cast and crew, the "Garry Shandling" Showtime producers on first night gave 'em — goldfish. Alan Rafkin's directing the cabler with Vanna White guesting, ex-Laker Marvin Roberts a regular. The set includes a basketball free throw court . . . Barney Rosenzweig had Martin Kove written out of "Cagney & Lacey" for a month so the thesp can star in the bigscreen "Steele's Justice."

Pasadena Star-News 8/7/18

Visual richness leaves behind plot in 'Rare Area'

George Coates' "Rare Area" is a unique and wondrous experience. It's hard to describe and even harder to interpret, but it's a stunningly beautiful, deeply moving piece of theater.

"Rare Area," which opened Tuesday at the James A. Doolittle Theatre in Hollywood, is described as a "per-

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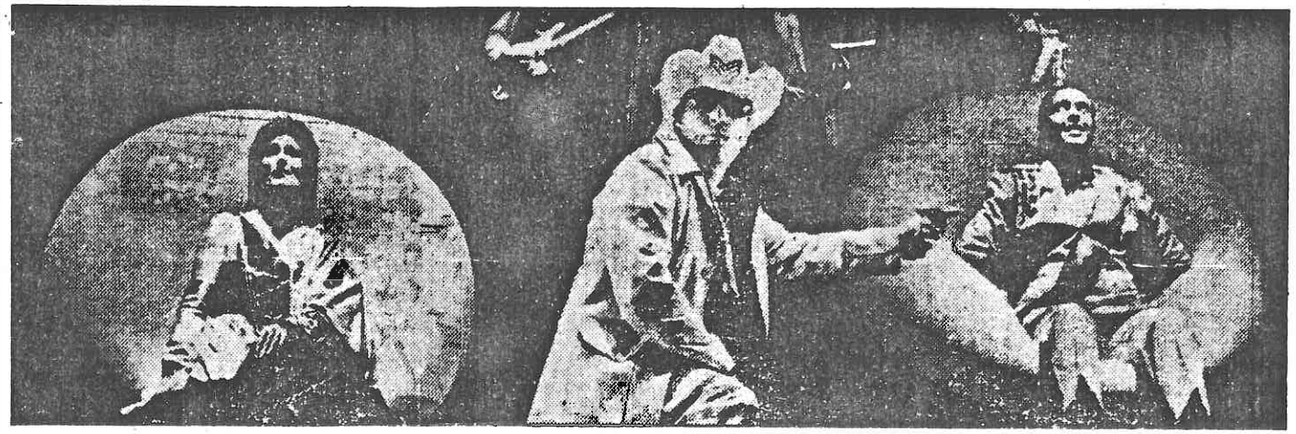


Mary Welkert / Star-News

Kathryn Neale, left, Sean Kilcoyne and John Duykers perform 'Rare Area' at the James A. Doolittle Theatre.

STAGE REVIEW: EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE (CONT'D.)

'Rare Area' puts image over plot in sensory feast

Continued from page 11

formance work." There is no story, just a free-flowing series of images set to music and a few short, scattered monologues.

The characters are free-flowing, too. But one can make out a highly civilized, aristocratic man and wife, a convict who has committed some sort of assassination and a bizarre young woman who is perpetually trapped by her environment but who bursts to freedom in a series of movements and dances.

Coates has said that the four characters represent contending archetypes of power — political, spiritual and personal. However, as we view it, "Rare Area" works on the audience as a total sensory experience.

The scenes unfold on an amorphous stage of colors and lights to the exquisite minimalist score of Marc Ream. The civilized couple, played on opening night by tenor John Duykers and soprano Kathryn Neale, convey their roles entirely through song, sometimes melodious, sometimes powerful, sometimes mournful.

We see the couple as political rulers, smiling and singing assuredly to their people against an enchanted background. Then we see the man upside down, lying on the inclined stage, the beauty of his song overwhelmed by pain and sorrow.

The soaring beauty of "Rare Area" is sporadically fractured by the gruff, confused, cynical barbs of the assassin (Sean Kilcoyne). His comments are random and unfocused, but they capture modern life at its most banal seconds after we've experienced moments of timeless beauty.

The visuals seem to encompass all of human history, from ancient temples to modern skyscrapers. The effects are achieved by a lighting projection system designed by Jeff Hunt and there are three or four awe-inspiring transitions.

One can say "Rare Area" is about the dehumanizing confines of modern life, the extremes that make up our world, the evils of the nation state, or the chaos of life that can only be ordered by art for a short time.

Performances are at the James Doolittle Theatre, 1615 N. Vine St., Hollywood, Wednesday through Sunday 8 p.m., Sunday matinee 3 p.m. Tickets range from $12-$20 and are available at the box office, through Ticketron, and Teletron. For phone charges, call (213) 410-1062. For information, call (213) 462-6666.

Long Beach Press Telegram
8/7/86

THEATER

'Rare Area' passes the acid test

By John J. Fried
Staff writer

While you may never have been tempted to take LSD or to chew funny mushrooms, you probably have wondered, at some time in your life, what a hallucination must be like. "Rare Area," which opened Tuesday at the James A. Doolittle Theater in Hollywood, offers you the opportunity to participate in just such an experience and with no risk to your record as a law-abiding citizen or to the physiological integrity of your brain.

"Rare Area" is a trip worth taking. This 70-minute example of what is called performance art pushes music, dance, voice, staging and lighting to the outer limits. In the process, it offers fascinating visions that compel you to pay attention even as you struggle to understand the intent of the scenarios being presented.

True, an anti-violence or anti-alienation message or two come across. But messages are secondary here. Most of the fascination you feel watching the developments is the result of watching and listening to an operatic tenor, a soprano, a dancer and an actor as they move on the stage as well as above it, amidst scrims and curtains that, within the flickering of a moment, turn into ancient ruins, modern high-rise apartment buildings or the constructs of an arcane architectural mind.

There is a hypnotic lure, too, in light effects that allow performers to float, that endow them with shapes and forms seemingly duplicated only among the inhabitants of a deep and mysterious ocean, that give costumes almost extraterrestial shimmer and sparkle.

Though it sounds impossible, there is cohesion in all of this. You sense that you are seeing something logical and complete whether you watch an egg-like cocoon oscillate, change colors, change shapes and finally give birth to a startled dancer who, suspended from a long cord, dances on the sides of a building, or whether you listen to an operatic duet (sung beautifully in syllables rather than words) between a dictator and his wife while an assassin makes futile attempts on his life.

Early in the performance members of the audience did walk out. But "Rare Area" more than held its own with everybody else, providing a quick and intense imaginative fix for those willing to stay with it.

theater review

"Rare Area." Part 4 of George Coates Performance Works' "How Trilogy." James A. Doolittle Theater, 1615 N. Vine St., Hollywood. Wednesday-Thursday, 8 p.m.; Friday-Saturday, 8 and 10 p.m.; Sunday 3 and 8 p.m.; $22-22. Through Aug. 24. Phone: 462-6666.

STAGE

'Rare Area' looks, sounds better than it is

By Tom Jacobs
Daily News Theater Critic

It isn't boring. That's the first thing to be said on behalf of "Rare Area," George Coates' avant-garde theater piece that opened Tuesday night at the Doolittle Theatre.

It isn't boring, and it's often pretty. Unexpected, pleasing visual images delight us for much of the work's 70-minute running time.

But a couple of nagging questions remain at the end: Is it really anything more than a series of pretty images, set to some pretty music? Is there any substance to it at all?

If the answer to either is yes, they sure weren't evident.

"Rare Area," a huge success this spring in the San Francisco Bay area, Coates' home base, is a non-narrative montage of sights and sounds. Four performers — a mime (Hitomi Ikuma), an actor dressed in a prison uniform (Sean Kilcoyne), and two opera singers (John Duykers and Kathryn Neale opening night — they rotate with several colleagues) spend the evening popping in and out of various parts of Jerome Sirlin's complex, surreal set.

Lori Valesko/Daily News

Kathryn Neale, John Duykers, Sean Kilcoyne in "Rare Area."

The singers sing, though the words (if there are words) are totally unintelligible. The mime jumps about. The actor takes a pistol and keeps shooting the singers at point-blank range. They do not react.

That's about it.

Marc Ream's score is agreeably eclectic. It begins in a pseudo-minimalist mode, shifts to neo-romanticism and, later, to a jazzy sound. Coates' imagery is equally varied, ranging from semaphore flags and staircases, to globs of shifting colors.

The idea, apparently, is to let the work wash over you in a blur of imagery and music that stimulates the subconscious and initiates the imagination. Whether the limitations are in the work or the reviewer, the most common reactions to the goings-on on stage were "What a clever effect" or "I wonder how they did that?"

That's not too inspirational.

The most interesting parts of the evening are two interludes in which Kilcoyne offers some wry comments while slides showing scenes of contemporary life are projected on a large screen. During these sequences, one begins to think Coates might actually have something to say.

But their relevance to the rest of the proceedings is practically non-existent. Soon we're back on Coates' bizarre landscape of white flags and balloons and singers on their backs sliding down a raked platform as they vocalize.

Strange? You bet. Interesting? Moderately. Meaningful? No way.

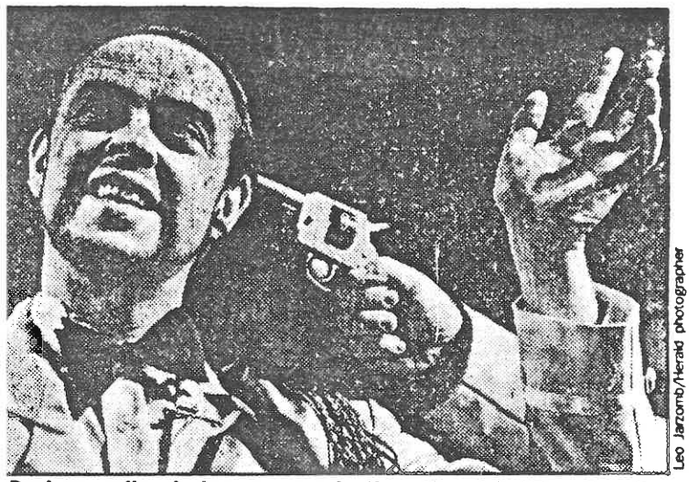
STAGEVIEW

- **The play:** "Rare Area."
- **Where:** James A. Doolittle Theatre, 1615 N. Vine St., Hollywood.
- **When:** 8 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, 8 and 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday, 3 and 8 p.m. Sunday through Aug. 24.
- **Starring:** Actor Sean Kilcoyne, mime Hitomi Ikuma, tenor John Duykers (alternating with White Eagle), soprano Kathryn Neale (alternating with Fabienne and Kathy Knight).
- **Behind the scenes:** Conceived and directed by George Coates. Music by Marc Ream. Set design and scenic projections by Jerome Sirlin.
- **Tickets:** $12 to $22. Call (213) 410-1062.
- **Rating:** C

rald Examiner
ursday
gust 7, 1986

STYLE

The Doolittle turns into a "Rare Area."/C-14



Leo Jarzomb/Herald photographer

Duykers smiles during an assassination attempt in "Rare Area."

Vhat can you expect rom the fourth part f a Coates trilogy?

AREA, a music theater spectacle ived and directed by George Coates; by Marc Ream; sets & scenic tions by Jerome Sirlin; lighting by Jeff costumes by Cynthia DuVal; presented James A. Doolittle Theater, 1615 N. it., Hollywood, 8 p.m. Wed-Sun, with a . show Fri-Sat, 3 p.m. Sun. Tickets: 22. Information: 462-6666.

.....John Duykers/White Eagle
no.....Kathryn Neale
.....Sean Kilcoyne
'Movement .....Hitomi Ikuma

ichard Stayton
d theater critic

Rare Area" at the James A. ittle Theater in Hollywood is 'ourth performance piece of ge Coates' "How Trilogy." can a fourth be part of a ?

oates' mystical titles give a First there was "The Way of " then "Are/Are," finally hear." After seeing and hear- such musically and visually morphous, perverse operas, into three make perfect .

riting about any of the four of the "How Trilogy" is like g to describe an action ing while the artist paints. riting about water running igh your hands. Or captur- moonlight in a glass. Or rating the effects of an rground nuclear test with uments melted in a millionth second.

ut while experiencing es' ceaseless aural, visual and al banquet, we're often eu- ic with delicious tastes. But a es experience can also re- le a meal at a Chinese urant. Ten minutes after the 'ortune cookie, you're abso- famished.

n minutes after "Rare ," the Coates banquet is over. gone with the first burp.

Sometimes Coates seems like a maestro, and sometimes he's more like Mephisto. In "Rare Area," it's a combination of the two, with the result being more maelstrom than magic. Despite an abundance of fertile, sometimes stunning moments, "Rare Area" never completely coalesces.

Yet it remains a valiant departure for Coates, and one hopes he will continue his growth toward a revolutionary style merging all theater arts into a new form. Coates isn't simply after aesthetic magic; he's after absolute breakthrough. He provokes an audience's consciousness to force change.

But there is the transcendental and there is the trance.

This time out, much of the problem is in Marc Ream's pedestrian rock score. Previously, Coates worked with minimalist composer Paul Dresher, whose hypnotic vocal and musical arias beautifully shadow Coates' trancelike imagery. Here, not even the presence of a "floating orchestra" (the band plays behind and slightly above the stage and is occasionally lit to create a hovering effect) can transport Ream's compositions beyond routine accompaniment.

Nor can the presence of a recognizable, overtly political story line — a first for Coates — salvage "Rare Area." Coates boldly but unsuccessfully attempts to reveal/heal the schism between Western rationality and Eastern spirituality.

Immediately we meet his quartet of performer/singers — John Duykers, Kathryn Neale, Sean Kilcoyne, Hitomi Ikuma — hovering among Coates' trademark Venetian blinds, upon which a vast repertoire of slide images are projected. At first the four are unified, but gradually they tilt forward, almost perpendicular to the stage. They appear to bob, weave and fly. A harpist appears in the background to serenade their levitation.

Next, in a brilliant costume of diaphanous light, one performer seems to execute a Tai-Chi dance, still hovering in midair. From the wings strolls a man dressed in a striped prison uniform. He gazes in bafflement at the dancer until she disappears, then turns to us and asks, "What the hell was that?"

Discarding his prison garb, this "actor" (Sean Kilcoyne) discovers the dancer lying prone on a mover's dolly. "Oh, yeah, sure," he grumbles to us about this coincidence. Then a slide of a vacant theater is projected against the front scrim, and on its stage another series of images is seen. Meanwhile, the "actor" comments with art-smart jokes.

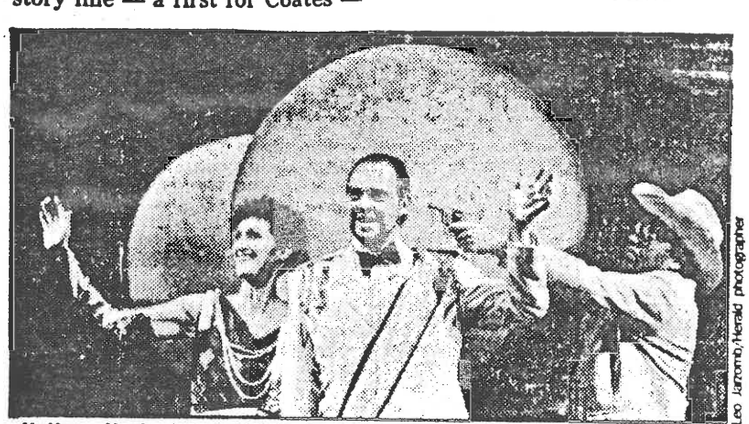
But this device proves more distancing than disturbing. Coates makes his political subtext overt, but fails to synthesize it within his aesthetic context. It's part Bertolt Brecht, part Robert Wilson — and minimal George Coates. With the visual flow broken repeatedly as the "actor" unsuccessfully assassinates famous contemporary political couples — the Perons, Reagans and Marcoses — we get the message without the McLuhanesque massage.

But one sequence proves absolutely dazzling. A bundle dangles by a rope from the rafters. It seems to throb, heave, pulsate, and in the fluttering light gradually resembles a cocoon. A series of vaginal images flashes over its ever-expanding shape. Out of it bursts a woman who, attached to the rope by a harness, suddenly leaps out at the audience. She kicks like a mountain climber as the barrage of accompanying visuals portray a landscape of skyscrapers. The breathtaking effect recalls the Robert De Niro character in "Brazil," an anti-fascist guerrilla operating like a spy against the Big Brother background.

Finally, three of the singers roll down a raised platform like gymnasts while directed by an Asian mime with a white flag. The parallels to America's failed Southeast Asian wars are obvious, but the balletic movements are beautiful to watch.

An abstract surrender is at last enacted — a surrender of the will — when four white flags are ceremonially broken. This becomes a brief, moving tableaux of East meeting

In the same spirit, let's call "Rare Area" the third part of the "How" quartet.



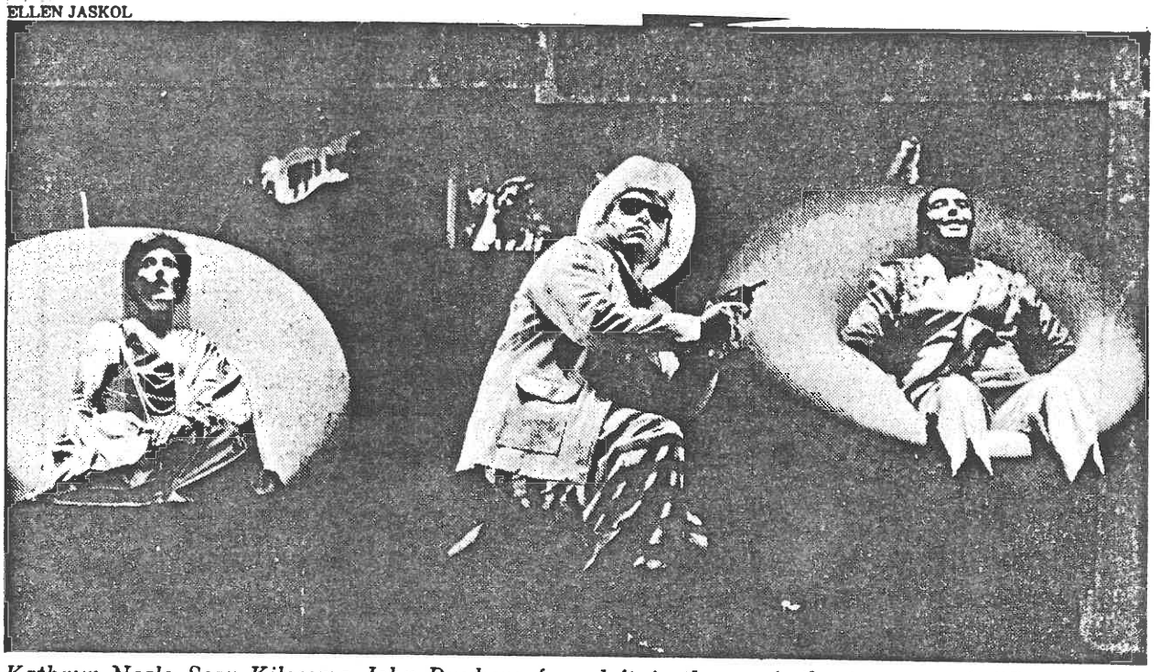
Leo Jarzomb/Herald photographer

Kathryn Neale, left, and John Duykers, center, seem blissfully unaware of the assassination attempt by Sean Kilcoyne in George Coates' "Rare Area."

Los Angeles Times

Thursday, August 7, 1986

ELLEN JASKOL



Kathryn Neale, Sean Kilcoyne, John Duykers, from left, in the music theater spectacle "Rare Area."

STAGE REVIEW

JOURNEY THROUGH A 'RARE AREA'

George Coates' works are dreamscapes. Logic and gravity don't apply. The images float above the stage, like fish seen through the window of a bathysphere. Look at the way they light up! And these fish know how to sing opera.

The next thing you know, the fish has turned into an astronaut. When Coates' magic works, you hold your breath. When it doesn't work, you wonder if the stage isn't too earthbound to capture such an evanescent vision. Perhaps Coates' real *metier* is holograms.

By DAN SULLIVAN,
Times Theater Critic

"Rare Area," Coates' new piece at the Doolittle Theatre, both confirms and denies this suspicion. It doesn't have a plot but it does convey the sense of a journey. The journey-takers are four: a tenor (John Duykers), a soprano (Kathryn Neale), a mime (Hitomi Ikuma) and a low comic who wonders what the hell is going on here (Sean Kilcoyne).

Some of the audience may be wondering the same thing, but there is no problem staying with the piece once the viewer decides not to try to add it up until it's over. (It's short enough to allow this: only about an hour.)

Our travelers start out in a place that might be the tropics—Cynthia Du Val's costumes suggest that it's Noel Coward's tropics, where only mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the noonday sun—and they end up in a place where it's necessary to wear *coats*, which may or may not be a pun. In between, they find themselves projected into all sorts of imaginary landscapes (rather, the landscapes are projected behind

Please see 'RARE AREA,' Page 5

more

Continued

Los Angeles Times

'RARE AREA'

Continued from Page 1

them) and into all sorts of situations.

The backgrounds (designed by Jerome Sirlin) can be as abstract as a cracked ice floe or as real as a photomural. The situations tend to be patterned. An image of peril—a figure dangling from the ledge of a flatiron-style building, guarded by a man and a woman in red—will convey the idea of danger, but no sense that anyone is actually in it. Everything's behind glass, possibly the glass of a TV set. (We see the comic snoozing in front of his TV.)

Some of the situations are funny. Duykers becomes a smiling public man, possibly a President, surreptitiously coached by his smiling public wife, Neale, as to what to say, or rather what to sing.

Here, as throughout the piece, composer Marc Ream gives them a sweet, wistful, wordless music that recalls the purity of Renaissance part-singing. For music so uninsistent, it's surprising how we miss it when it stops.

"Rare Area" isn't trying to stun us, but to beguile us, just as the Elizabethan court masques, with their dances and their "transformations," must have intrigued their audiences. It's essential in such cases, though, that the viewer not see the trick.

We're charmed at the Doolittle when three figures swing in space, seemingly divorced from their lower halves. It's less intriguing when the spill from the lights reveals their legs, taking baby-steps up and down a ramp.

This may have been a technical snafu, but there were other moments Tuesday when we thought we could see the little man behind the curtain. It's hard to do that and still get lost in a piece. The best theater magicians these days never let you in on the trick or, even more cleverly, let you in on it right away, so that you can look past it.

On the other hand, Coates made true theater magic when he had three figures roll down the ramp, their weight demonstrating the gravity that "Rare Area" generally tries to rise above. The simplicity of the image was elegant, and the ending of the show suggested that Coates may be on the verge of a change in his art.

Earlier, the characters had displayed electronified banners that bristled with ever-changing color signals, like a TV set that couldn't hold a channel. Now they took the banners out of the projected light, and we saw that the flags were only plain cloth.

Then they broke the shafts of the banners, almost in a spirit of gladness—like someone making a gift. The reference to Prospero renouncing his magic in "The Tempest" was unmistakable. "Rare Area" may not send Coates into holograms at all, but into a barer and purer kind of theater. It will be at the Doolittle through Aug. 24.

'RARE AREA"

A music theater spectacle at the James A. Doolittle Theatre. Presented by George Coates Performance Works. Producer Charles Rose. Executive producer Colleen Larkin. Executive director Edward Sisson. Director Coates. Associate director Melissa Weaver. Music Marc Ream. Set design and scenic projections Jerome Sirlin. Costume design Cynthia Duval. Overhead lighting and technical direction Larry Neff. With John Duykers, White Eagle, Kathryn Neale, Fabienne, Kathy Knight, Sean Kilcoyne, Hitomi Ikuma. Musicians: Larry Schneider, Chris Halaby, Jamie Robertson, Barbara Imhoff, Eric Muhler, Jarell Irvin. Plays Wednesdays-Thursdays at 8 p.m., Fridays-Saturdays at 8 and 10 p.m., Sundays 3 and 8 p.m.; closes Aug. 24. Tickets $14-$22. 1615 N. Vine St., (213) 462-6666.

Herald Examiner
Wednesday
August 6, 1986

STYLE

George Coates becomes popular in a rare area — performance art

By Michael Lassell

Back in the late '60s, that watershed era for stepping over approved lines of decorum, George Coates fled his native Rhode Island — and the life that had been mapped out for him by his first-generation American parents — for the liberation of California.

"They've been reduced to cliched, outdated fashion now," says the '80s Coates, an internationally renowned performance artist whose "Rare Area" opened last night at the Doolittle Theater for a run that's scheduled to end Aug. 24, "but all those ideas in that period — the 'turn on,' the 'tune in,' the 'do your own thing' — those were very liberating ideas."

Coates, a large and gentle bearded man with twinkling eyes, has been breaking rules ever since he landed in San Francisco back in the youth decade. A non-student hanging out in Berkeley, he auditioned for a role in a university production of "Macbeth." He was cast as the Porter and launched upon an even more demanding impersonation, that of a college undergraduate.

Afraid that his colleagues would find out his secret, he'd go to the Moffet Library every morning to read "every book on theater there ... from the Greeks to Diderot and Pirandello." He gleaned modern trends in theater from back issues of the Drama Review at a Telegraph Avenue bookstore.

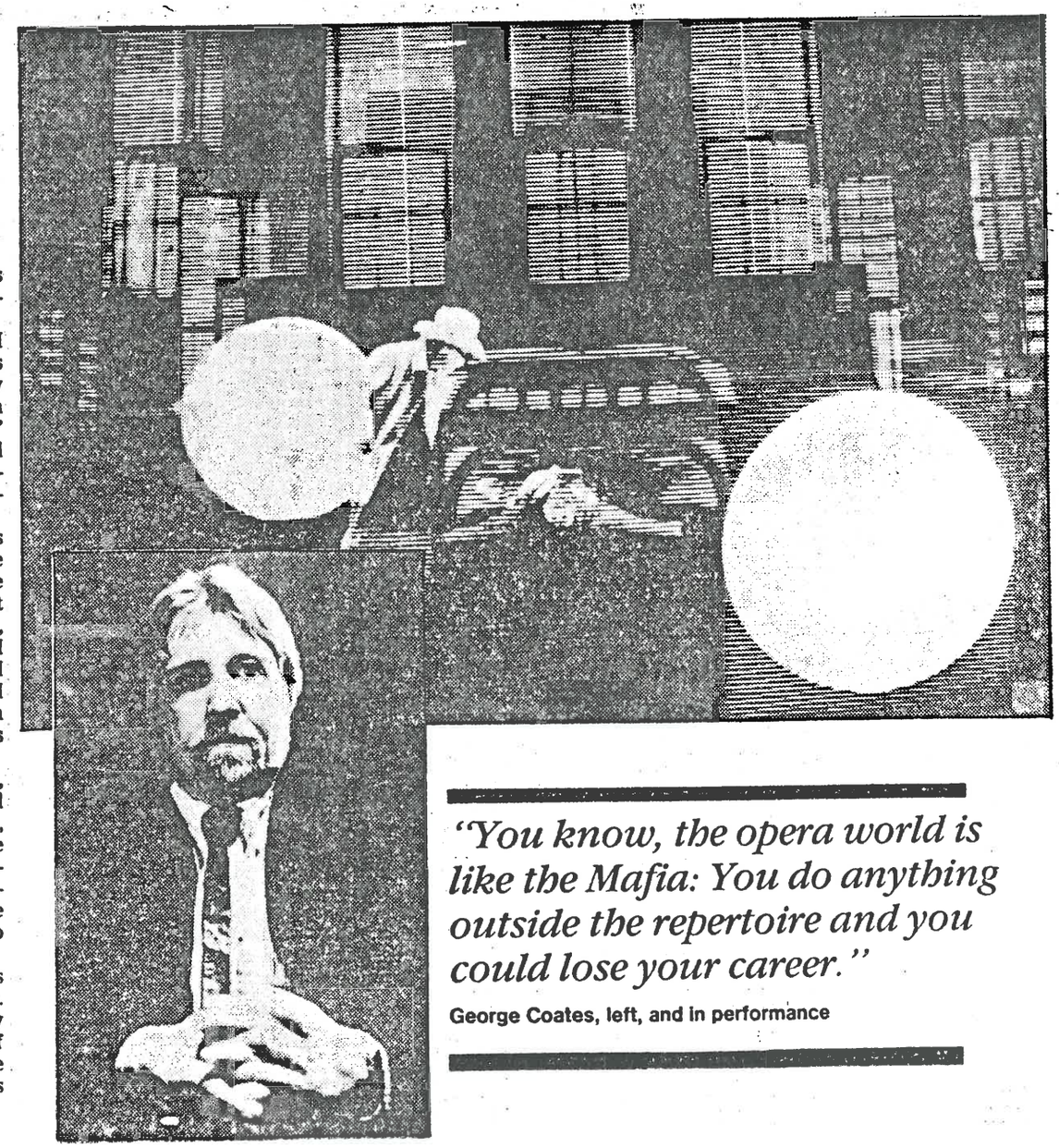
"I overdid it," he says now. "I didn't know what the standards were, and I assumed they were very high. I think I gave myself an exceptionally thorough education." He did well enough on-stage to land his first acting job with the roaming National Shakespeare Company.

"I was traveling for nine months with 16 of the most insufferable people," he says. "They didn't care about art. For them, it was all about the poker game after the show and, 'Can I get on Johnny Carson/Will I get an agent/How many lines do I have/Who might upstage me?' I began to realize that there was a distinction between show business and art."

The tour ended in the Bay Area, where Coates found himself invited to join the Blake Street Hawkeyes, an experimental theater ensemble from the Iowa Center of Performing Arts. He stayed with the company for about 2½ years while he found out what he really wanted to do. And that was to direct.

But Coates had new notions about direction, and about theater. "The idea," he says, echoing many of his contemporaries, "was to see if we couldn't find an alternative process of making performances

Coates/C-7



"You know, the opera world is like the Mafia: You do anything outside the repertoire and you could lose your career."

George Coates, left, and in performance

(more)

Continued

Coates

Continued from page C-1

other than beginning with a script." So he shepherded together an unorthodox flock of professionals that included a belly dancer, a pair of wrestlers and a retired politician. They began to make small pieces for experimental theater festivals.

Then Coates met operatic tenor John Duykers and the group built a work around the singer's problems with his avant-garde sensibilities. "You know," says Coates, "the opera world is like the Mafia: You do anything outside the repertoire and you could lose your career." It was another barrier to break, another assumption to challenge.

"I have no agenda. My idea . . . is to avoid propaganda and not pursue or push or pimp a particular platform or idea."

Working in the gymnasium of an old school gave Coates and his ensemble, now known as the George Coates Performance Works, the chance to increase their scale and to include the spectacular visual effects that have become their hallmark.

Coates is a rarity among performance artists in that he has an enormous popular following in both the U.S. and abroad. Part of the reason, Coates readily admits, is that his work is hard to define. Some people think of it as theater, others as art or dance. Some relate it to new music. Mulitmedia extravaganzas of incredible sophistication, Coates' work draws support from all those audiences. But the key is more likely to be found in the way Coates synthesizes his ingredients.

"Rare Area" is somewhat jokingly considered to be the fourth play in Coates' "How Trilogy," which has until now consisted of "The Way of How," "Are/Are" and "Seehear." All four have been hailed for their visual artistry. "Rare Area" won nine Bay Area Critics Circle Awards this year, including Best Production, Best Direction, Technical Achievement and New Directions in Theater.

"There are elements of magic and surprise and pure theatricality that I hold dearly," says Coates. "Theater must find out what it can do on-stage that is *better* than what can be done on film or in a book or on the tube. When you see something *live* that's *impossible*, then some magic has happened."

What about the suggestion that his work is breathtakingly beautiful, but lacking in content?

Coates gasps audibly, horror registering on his cherubic face. "Oh, my goodness!" he says as Dorothy might to the wickedness of the Witch of the West. After taking a moment to calm down, he proceeds.

"What people usually mean when they say such a thing is that there's no monotheistic theme, no all-present political position that's being promoted. I have no agenda. My idea with this work is to avoid propaganda and not pursue or push or pimp a particular platform or idea. I won't do it.

"What I'm trying to do," he continues, "is celebrate the power of imagination in an evocative way so that the work is a trigger for each audience person to participate in the experience by completing, by entering in, by being moved to one degree or another, to make the connections and have the responses that come with each person's history."

Nonetheless, there is a political edge to "Rare Area." The unbroken, 90-minute spectacle features a tenor, a soprano, an actor and a movement artist, as well as a "floating" orchestra of five playing Marc Ream's eclectic "polyrhythmic" score, which incorporates sounds as diverse as new age and heavy metal.

It also includes "archetypal images," among them a "First Couple: Nancy and Ron; Imelda and Marcos; Juan and Evita." And an assassin who keeps bumping them off, only to be confronted by them again and again. There is a "good citizen who tries his best to follow the orthodoxy" and a more ethereal character who represents the spiritual force in the world.

A shorter version of "Rare Area," with taped rather than live music, played for one performance at UCLA last year and won serious raves from many local critics, particularly for what has been described as the "holographic 3-D stage environment" and the stylish accomplishment of the impossible.

Whatever "Rare Area" may be conceptually, it's proved to be a crowd-pleaser on a non-intellectual level, which pleases Coates. "Beauty can move," he says, "and to that extent, I like to be able to affect people and to create something that has some power just through its presence — visually, musically and the way the pieces come together. And I think it can be quite compelling in ways that you don't even understand."

Michael Lassell writes regularly about theater for the Herald.

GOOD TIMES

event picks of the week

L.A. WEEKLY
AUGUST 1986

BEACHED WAILS

Whooo-yea, dudes, the homeboys responsible for the L.A. Street Scene are takin' it to San Pedro this weekend for the first Los Angeles Beach Scene fest. There'll be more food booths than you can shake a Boogie Board at, no doubt featuring all sorts of swell things — be sure to take advantage of the sandwiches there. Arts 'n' crafts exhibits'll be as plentiful as barnacles on a whale's back, and KIIS-FM personalities (an oxymoron if I've ever heard one) will be on hand to move things along swimmingly. Bobs 'n' Bettys of all races, colors and creeds compete in a "Hard Body Contest," while more sensible sorts sit in the shade with a tall, cool one and smirk. Belinda Carlisle and Andy Taylor, Level 42, Sparks, the SOS Band and the totally rockin' L.A. Dream Team are just a few who'll do their various things on stage while you watch. The Pacific Ocean stretches clear out to China and don't let anybody tell you different. Don't be a shore loser.

—Hubert Mensch

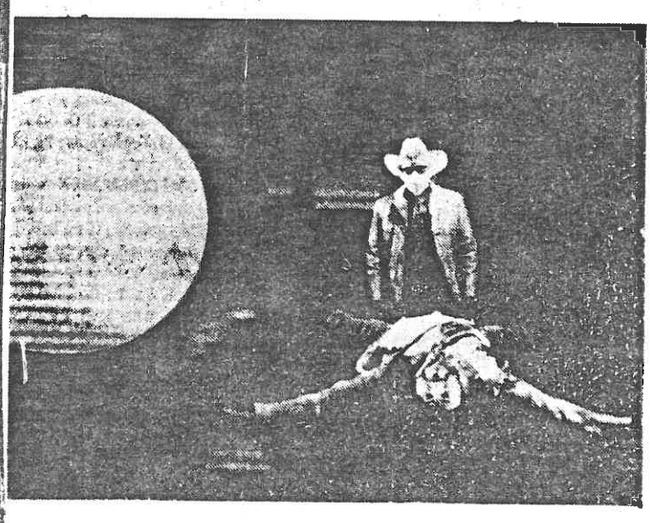
L.A. Beach Scene, *Cabrillo Beach, between Pacific Ave. & Stephen White Dr., San Pedro; Sat.-Sun., Aug. 2-3, 10 a.m.-7:30 p.m. Call (213) 726-7690. See Concerts for line-up information.*

CULTURE KLATCH

Hey, you with the bored look on your face — don't tell us you're still suffering from post-Olympics depression. So what if the Games are already two years past? So what if the athletic competitions have been usurped by Moscow? We've still got an Olympics leftover they can *never* take away: the greatest range of multiethnic arts to be found anywhere. And as a matter of fact, a good number of them will be on display at artsfest '86 this weekend in Exposition Park. How many is "a good number"? Add up painting and sculpture, mural-making, dance, theater, poetry, classical and popular music, mime, puppetry, youth arts & crafts and regional cuisines. Then multiply that number by lots and lots of cultures from all over the world. When you're all done, add a health expo. If *that's* not enough, well, you'll just have to go and see Mitch Gaylord in *American Anthem* and get it out of your system.

—Ben Kallen

artsfest '86, *on the grounds of the New California Museum of Science and Industry, Exposition Park; Sat.-Sun., Aug. 2-3, 11 a.m.-10:30 p.m.; free; donations of canned goods for area food banks welcomed. Call (213) 731-9227.*



COATES' TALES

In the big-budget interdisciplinary-arts sweepstakes, California's strongest contender is George Coates. The interdisciplinary collaborative extravaganzas of his *How* trilogy, with music by media darling Paul Dresher, were dreamlike, stark and compelling; new-age psychedelia without the jittery acid-trip edge of East Coast experiments in the genre. The "operas" have had more to look at than you could see, and more to hear than the ear could comprehend, but still managed to seem spare and composed. Coates' newest extravaganza, *Rare Area,* which takes the stage this week in Hollywood for a three-week run, has been praised by Bay Area critics as his strongest production yet.

—Jonathan O. Douglas

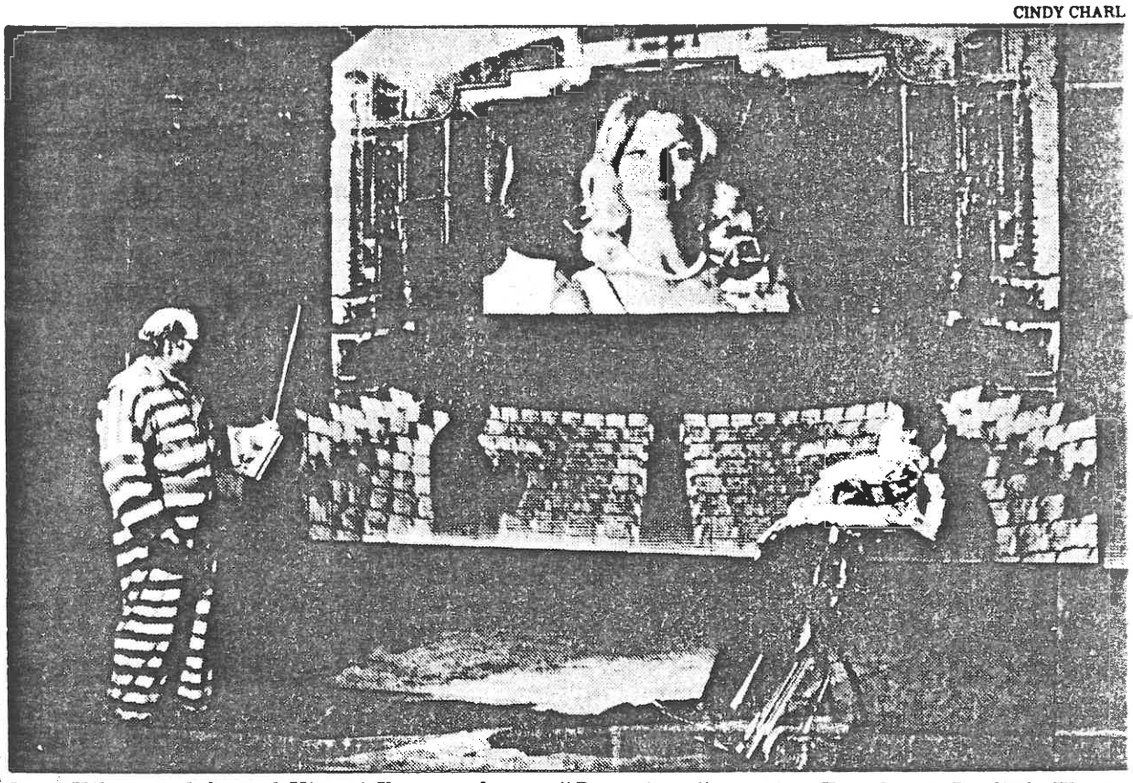
Rare Area, *Doolittle Theater, 1615 N. Vine St., Hlywd.; Sat.-Sun., Aug. 2-3 & Tues.-Thurs., Aug. 5-7, 8 p.m. Call (213) 462-6666.*

Los Angeles Times
Saturday, August 2, 1986

IE 'RARE AREA' OF EXPERIMENTAL THEATER

)BERT HURWITT

CINDY CHARL



Sean Kilcoyne, left, and Hitomi Ikuma rehearse "Rare Area," opening Tuesday at Doolittle Theatre

ERKELEY—"This feels more like an initiation into some weird club than a re-al," observed soprano Kathy t as she scribbled notes in the n of her score.

confusion was easy to un-nd: Nearby, Japanese mime i Ikuma, outfitted in a flying ss attached to a thick elastic was bounding all over the like a human cricket deter-l to defy gravity. Tenor John ers was explaining to tenor Eagle some of the finer of singing upside down.

the George Coates Perform-Works, it was a fairly htforward rehearsal. The ss of preparing the group's recent work, "Rare Area," for st extended Los Angeles run e James A. Doolittle Theatre llywood beginning Tuesday) of remounting, enlarging and uning a piece that is already ablished success.

what Coates insists is the th part" of his "How Trilogy" e Way of How," "are are" and ear"), "Rare Area" received reviews at its premiere at the Festival in Brussels in May, and at subsequent perform-in Berkeley and, last Octo-JCLA's Royce Hall.

at was just the stripped-down g version. "Rare Area" didn't its full fruition until late last mber when it opened a -month sold-out run in San cisco, setting new records for imental music theater with a audience of 23,000.

that run, Coates replaced the sound with a "live floating ": a harpist, guitarist, two oardists and a saxophone r.

e musicians appear and disap-seeming to hover above the four performers: the tenor soprano, dressed as a ruling e; the actor (Sean Kilcoyne) assin in a story more implied told, and the mime, represent-Coates says, the spirit of imagination. These four in turn seem to float above the stage, lifted by composer Marc Ream's eclectic, lyrical score and inhabiting Jerome Sirlin's rich, almost holographic projected environments.

Rushing about this huge rehearsal hall—the former cafeteria of a now-closed Berkeley public school—the sandy-haired, boyishly enthusiastic Coates pointed out that his usual rehearsal process is more a matter of creating than staging a work.

"Creating performance events through interactive discovery with a group of peer artists—that's what excites me about this work," Coates said. "It's a discovery as opposed to a development process. But that phase is over. This piece is finished, the dream complete. Now it's a pragmatic issue of how we can do eight a week at the Doolittle."

Those eight performances—on Wednesday and Thursday evenings and two shows on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays—Coates said would place intolerable demands on the voices of Duykers and Kathryn Neale, who originated the roles and will repeat them in Los Angeles.

The vocal parts are difficult enough with their inventive and sometimes deceptive rhythmical patterns drawing on a wide variety of Western, Asian and African sources—and even in one case, as White Eagle, a member of the Lakota tribe, observed, a traditional Native American folk song (composer Ream seemed as pleased as he was surprised by the observation).

Consequently, more singers have had to be added. Duykers and Neale will alternate with White Eagle, making his Los Angeles debut, and with "Fabienne"—the *nom de chanson* for an operatic soprano, well known in Europe, who explains that she fell in love with "Rare Area" in San Francisco, but her agent had qualms about her appearing in anything quite so experimental. Knight and Craig Knudsen are understudying the roles and will stand in for the principals at regular intervals.

Taking a different pair of singers each evening, Coates and associate director Melissa Weaver walk them through their parts, with Ikuma and Duykers assisting and Ream manning the tape deck.

Each of the performers must do much more than sing, and everything has to be mastered at once. There are elastic cords to deal with, enormous balloons to be manipu-

Please see PRESENTING, Page 4

PRESENTING THE 'RARE AREA' OF THEATER

Continued from Page 1

lated, strange and difficult movement patterns to master and unfamiliar gestures that must be made to appear natural.

The unseen backstage choreography is as intricate as that on the stage, with quick costume changes, invisible handling of visible props and a choice of five staircases leading to different parts of the stage with only one choice being the right one for each entrance.

"The whole show operates on a binary kind of black-white, on-off system," said Coates, pointing out that any part of the performer not in a thin shaft of light will be swallowed up in the projected slide environment.

Over and over, Coates moved back to the rear of the house to view an effect, then rushed back on stage with short, quick steps to adjust a performer's head, repeat a movement pattern or make a slight but telling change in the placement of a prop. "The problem with this show," Coates remarked at one point, "is that everything has to be perfect every time."

Only during a break in the rehearsal, back in the company office adjacent to the rehearsal hall, did Coates let slip the cheerful optimism that characterizes his every word and gesture when working with the performers.

"I've got a butterfly in my stomach with a 90-foot wingspan," he admitted, glancing at a blackboard filled with columns of expenses for the Doolittle engagement. (As it was in San Francisco, the George Coates Performance Works will be its own producer in Los Angeles—a major gamble, but Coates thinks its worth the risk.)

"If we succeed, it'll mean that groups like ourselves don't have to wait on the high priests—the festival directors and the people who run the major houses," Coates said. "We can do our work when we're ready to do it instead of when they are."

Back in the rehearsal hall, Duykers, Ikuma and Kilcoyne were going through their paces.

Fabienne and White Eagle had thrown themselves enthusiastically into the challenge of their roles.

Knudsen, who had been with the

Daily Breeze Aug 1, 1986

stage

George Coates' 'Rare Area' arrives in expanded version

George Coates Performance Works' "Rare Area" returns to Los Angeles Tuesday in an expanded production at the Doolittle Theater.

The San Francisco-based Coates company is known for its new music theater spectacles that feature cinematic visual effects, virtuoso vocal performances and unique lighting and sound scores.

"Rare Area" was commissioned for presentation at Europe's prestigious Kaai Theater Festival and received its world premiere in Brussels, Belgium, in 1985.

The show is "Part Four" of Coates' "How Trilogy," which includes "The Way of How" (BAM Next Wave Festival), "Are Are" (Theater Artaud, San Francisco) and "Seehear" (American Music Theater Festival, Philadelphia).

The holographic 3-D stage environment of "Rare Area" continuously transforms throughout the performance, making the ordinary laws of physics seem suspended as the performers interact in impossible situations.

Director Coates puts it this way: "The inhabitants of 'Rare Area' represent contending archetypes of power: political, spiritual and personal. Their intersections, alliances and detentes are enacted visually and musically."

The expanded production features the addition of a five-piece "floating band," performing Marc Ream's original polyrhythmic score re-orchestrated for live performance.

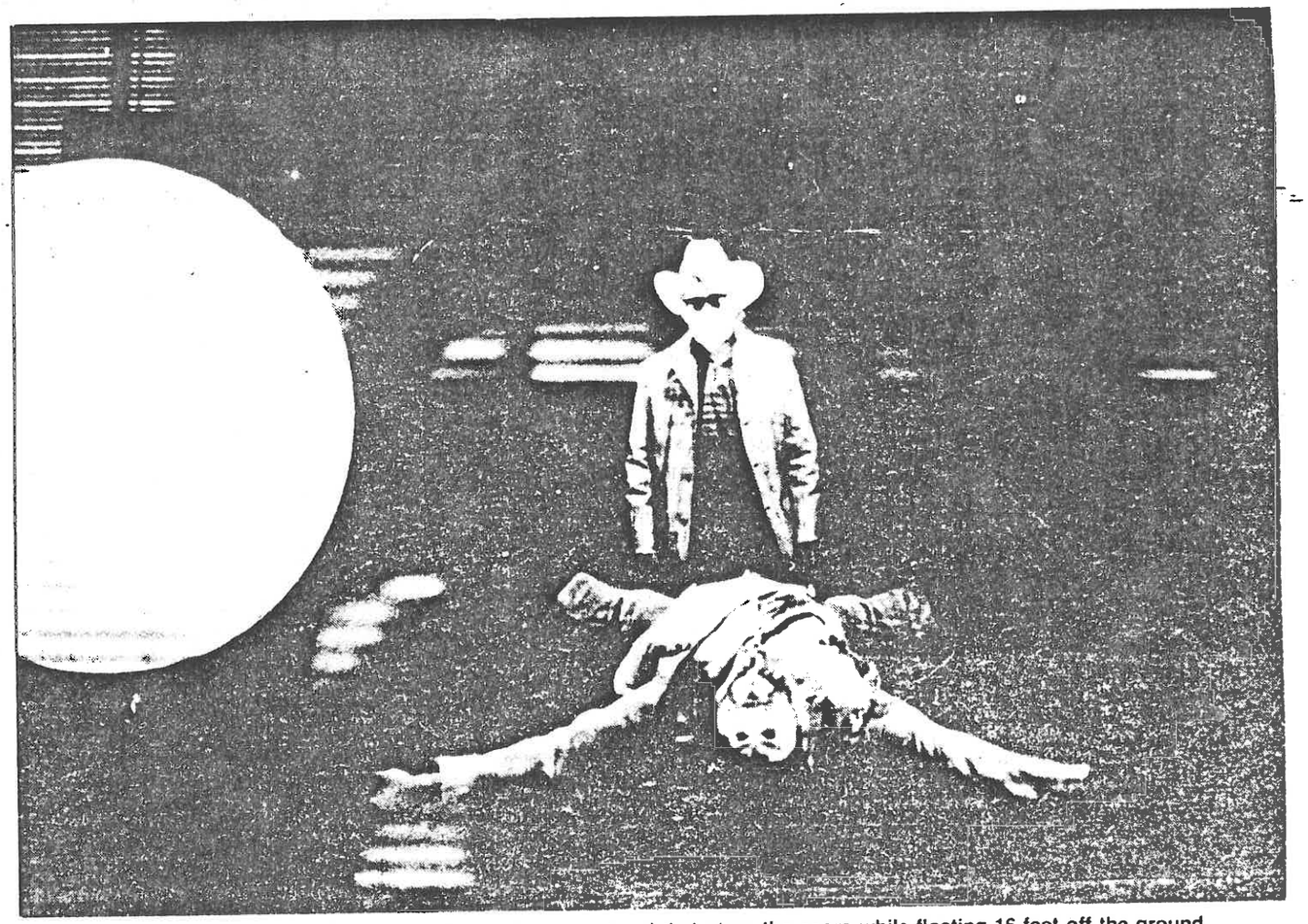
in theater

The original "Rare Area" cast members — operatic tenor John Duykers, soprano Kathryn Neale and actor Sean Kilcoyne — are joined by sopranos Fabienne Avitar and Kathy Knight, Japanese mime and movement artist Hitomi Ikuma and American Indian tenor White Eagle.

The performance schedule is 8 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, 8 and 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 3 and 8 p.m. Sunday through Aug. 24, 1615 N. Vine St.: 462-6666.

STAGE

George Coates says he's trying to create a dream world an audience can enter while fully awake.



A scene from 'Rarearea,' which features such surprises as a band that plays the score while floating 16 feet off the ground.

More

George Coates: The reluctant crowd pleaser

His latest performance piece, 'Rarearea,' is an evocative political work

By Cathy Curtis
The Register

It's hard to imagine anyone in the theatrical world concerned about getting *too* much coverage in People magazine. But Bay Area performance art mastermind George Coates was actually worried that a recent article about San Francisco's "hippest form of expression" would make his new music-theater spectacle seem no more significant than today's hot new trend.

The reticence is understandable when you know that Coates — who is bringing "Rarearea" to the Doolittle Theatre in LA for a limited run beginning Saturday — only recently graduated from creating rather precious work for "elite adventure-goers" to pulling in a mainstream audience.

So what is "Rarearea," anyway?

"We're trying to create a dream world that the audience can enter into fully awake," Coates says.

Commissioned for a Belgian theater festival in 1985, "Rarearea" features such surprises as: a band that plays Marc Ream's polyrhythmic musical score while floating 16 feet off the ground; cinema-sized optical illusions of architectural images; and five virtuoso singers. The result is a panoply of wondrous visual effects, somewhat like a constantly changing series of holographs with a musical accompaniment.

But the piece is not just a sound-and-light show. "You might think it's about nothing," Coates says. "Actually it's about everything, but no one thing in particular." His deliberate vagueness seems calculated to emphasize the "evocative, as opposed to provocative" nature of what is in fact an inherently political work.

Using "very clear archetypal imagery," as Coates explains, he has created a stage world in which "political, personal and spiritual power intersect just as they do in our life."

A smiling couple (representing, says Coates, "figureheads" like Juan and Evita Peron or Ron and Nancy Reagan) sit on a throne, waving to the public, sipping drinks and singing lines they read from index cards. Another character represents "political power." A fourth individual is "an Everyman . . . who watches a lot of TV, eats junk food and doesn't have power. He's a flag waver who . . . assassinates the figureheads throughout the performance, but nothing happens (because) there are always figureheads."

Unseen by the other performers, mime Hitomi Ikuma represents "spiritual power and pure beauty." Like Ariel in Shakespeare's "The Tempest," he is a sprite who assumes various forms.

"Rarearea" is the fourth in a series created by George Coates Performance Works that began several years ago with a luminous evening of theater called "The Way of How." An all-white dreamscape peopled by a tenor (John Dukyers, who also appears in "Rarearea") and two actors manipulating a few simple props, "The Way of How" introduced an arty Bay Area audience to a childlike yet tantalizingly philosophical adventure.

"Are Are," the next work in the series, involved a slightly greater complexity of stagecraft, but with "Seehear," Coates' legerdemain zoomed into another dimension of multimedia razzle-dazzle. Reviewers hard put to describe the "simple" magic of "The Way of How" were reduced to vague lists of adjectives when it came to the extraordinary three-dimensional images and sound effects of "Seehear."

To accommodate their increasing complexity, Coates' enterprises have consumed escalating sums of money (from a bare-bones $600 for "The Way of How" to $120,000 for "Rarearea" and an additional $475,000 to revamp it for LA audiences). Still, as Coates points out, although such figures are immense by the bailing-wire-and-Scotch-tape standards of most performance art, they are tiny for the legitimate theater.

More significant is the increased attention Coates' works have received from the general public. After "Rarearea" became what Coates reluctantly calls a "crowd-pleaser" in the Bay Area, a local TV station posed the question, "What if the avant-garde did a show and regular people came?" And when the show had a one-night engagement at UCLA's 1,800-seat Royce Hall last fall, nearly the entire audience stayed afterward for a spirited question-and-answer session with the cast

Yet the problem is to get audiences to the theater in the first place. "The whole thing now is marketing," Coates admits. How do you sell 40,000 tickets if you can't describe the work properly? But he believes the logical format of language just isn't sufficient to convey the strange textures of "Rarearea."

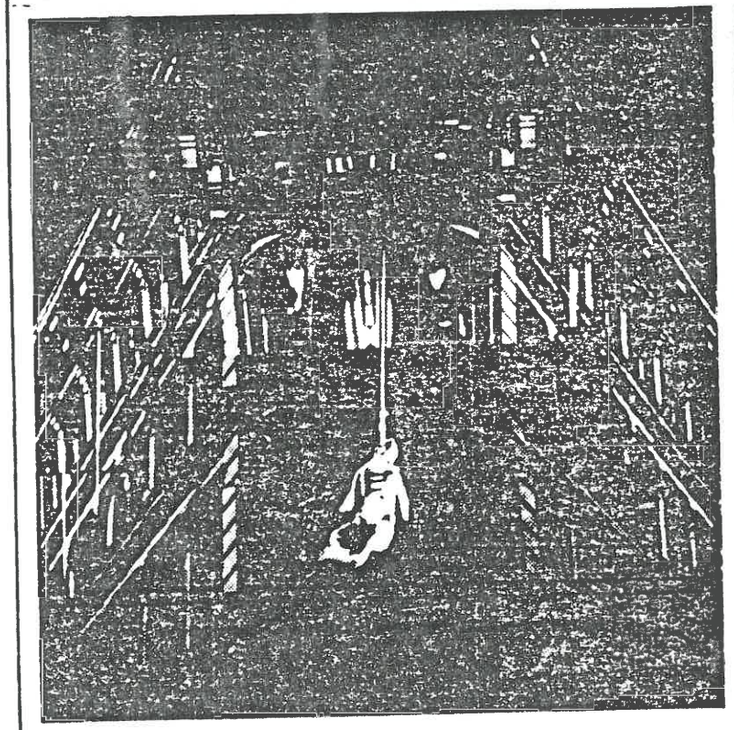
"You know that little place just before you fall asleep? That little area there? Well, I want to put that onstage. And how do you describe it without having people think, 'Oh boy, here come the (flaky) Californians?' "

REVIEW

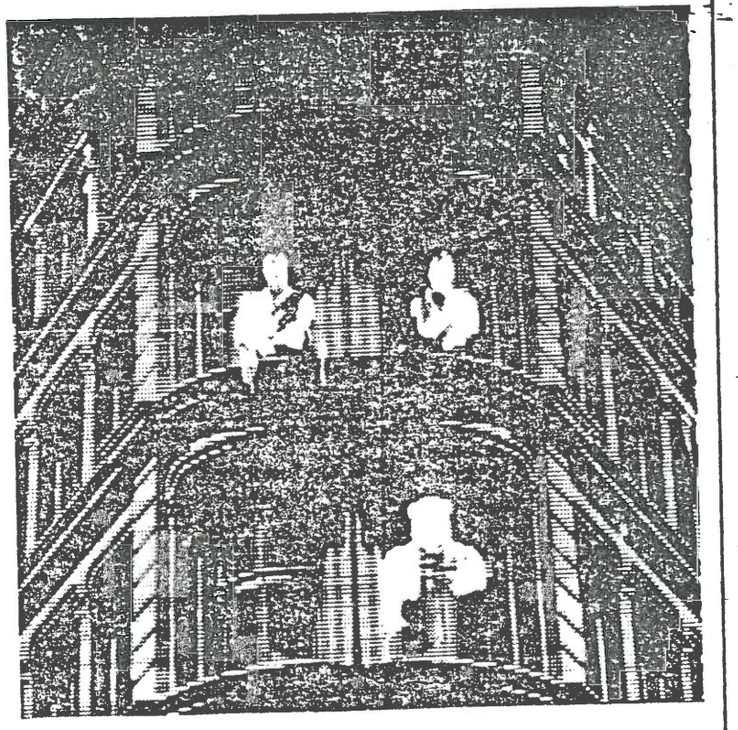
What: "Rarearea," a music-theater spectacle.
Where: Doolittle Theatre, 1615 N. Vine St. (between Hollywood and Sunset Blvds.), Hollywood.
When: Previews Aug. 2 and 3. Regular performances Aug. 5-24: Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday at 8 p.m.; Friday and Saturday at 8 and 10 p.m.; Sunday matinee at 3 p.m.
How Much: Previews: $9. Regular performances: Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday nights $14 to $20; Friday and Saturday nights $16 to $22; Sunday matinees $9. Tickets available at the Doolittle box office and Teletron outlets.
Call: (213) 462-6666.

STAGE

George Coates' performance art



"Rare Area," by George Coates, above, begins a three-week run at the James A. Doolittle Theatre Tuesday night.



more

Director hopes his avant-garde theater piece will become an adventure for ordinary audience

By Tom Jacobs
Daily News Theater Writer

George Coates was in People magazine a couple of weeks ago. The story was headlined "This year's hippest form of expression: performance art," and though the San Francisco-based avant-garde stage director wasn't mentioned prominently, that was just fine with him.

First of all, he doesn't like the term "performance art." He prefers "new music theater spectacle," adding, "I keep it ambiguous as to which are the adjectives" in that list of words.

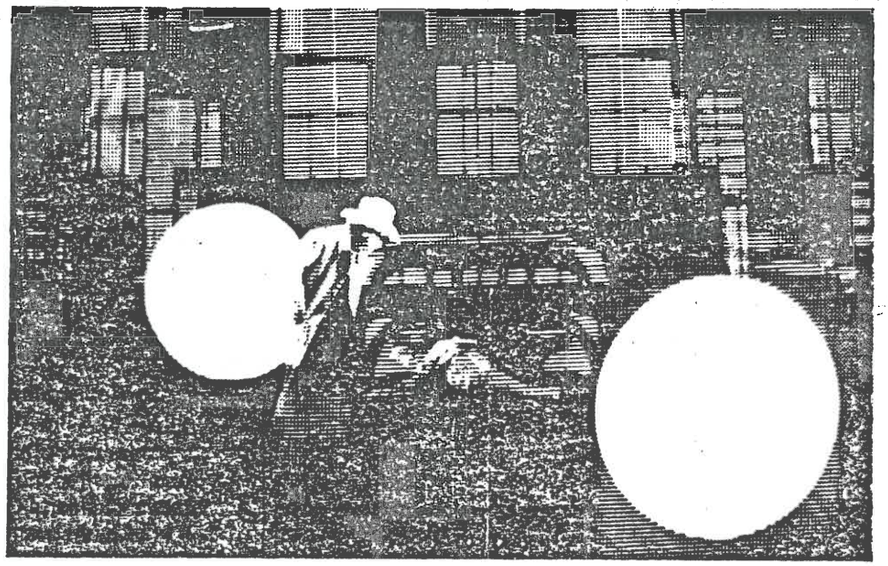
For that matter, he wasn't too thrilled with the rest of the headline, either. He doesn't think of what he does as a fad to be replaced by next year's hippest form of expression. He considers it an art form, albeit one in its early stages.

Coates was happy, however, that the magazine "mentioned our numbers" — specifically the 30,000 people who have seen his "Rare Area," which opens Tuesday at the James A. Doolittle Theatre.

'We've broken through'

"I don't think numbers like that have been racked up (previously) in this kind of work," he said on a recent visit to Los Angeles. "That's the exciting thing. We've broken through from the esoteric audience of adventuregoers to a popular audience of ordinary people."

Indeed, the show played earlier this year for 16 weeks in San Francisco — an unheard-of run for an uncompromising, avant-garde theater piece. "Families were coming with their kids," he recalled with a smile. "Limousines were driving up from the chi-chi Nob Hill neighborhood."



Nevertheless, he expressed some anxiety about the scheduled three-week run at the Doolittle, admitting "I have a butterfly in my stomach with a 90-foot wing span." Coates has brought a show to the Southland every year since 1982 — an earlier version of "Rare Area" played at UCLA last year — but they have always been one- or two-night stands.

"If the thing becomes an event, I think we'll do fine. If it's perceived as 'the-ah-tuh,' we'll have a hard time."

"Rare Area" — Coates originally spelled it as one word until he realized "Rarearea" looked like a jumble of letters — is a 70-minute piece incorporating various art forms, including music, dialogue, mime and lots of visual imagery. Performers on platforms seem to float through the work.

Like all of Coates' theater pieces, this one wasn't so much created as it was "discovered through a process of interaction" between the director and his collaborators. Its gestation period was "six months of trial and error and investigations."

"We thought, if we were to find something new in performance, we had better start by changing the process by which it's created," he reasoned. "The process has normally been that someone from another art form — literature — takes the lead by writing a verbal narrative. The script is created, a director takes it, a cast comes in.

"What we've tried to do is turn that whole system upside down and start with the cast, the technicians, the fabric designers. We say to all the designers and the (other) people we've gathered, 'Show us the raw stuff you've got.' We'll try to find a way (to use it) so it's not just a gratuitous special effect."

"The audience creates as they enter into (the work), as with a Rorschach paint blot," he said. "They participate in making the piece theirs.

'Enriching the sensibilities'

"We're interested in enriching the sensibilities of people who come in contact with the work. That means we're hoping to grease the modes of perception — to expand the capacities to see and to hear, to use the imagination."

Not surprisingly, that attitude has caused some to suggest that Coates' work has little intrinsic content.

"I'm not against language," he said. "I love to go to the West End in London and watch the great practitioners of language do their stuff. But I do think that there might be additional ways of approaching this stuff that are intrinsically theatrical — a theater of show and sound, of light and color."

STAGEVIEW

- **The play:** "Rare Area."
- **Where:** James A. Doolittle Theatre, 1615 N. Vine St., Hollywood.
- **When:** Previews 8 and 10 p.m. Saturday, 3 and 8 p.m. Sunday. Opens 8 p.m. Tuesday. Regular schedule: 8 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday; 8 and 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday; 3 and 8 p.m. Sunday, through Aug. 24.
- **Starring:** John Duykers, Kathryn Neale, Fabienne Avitar, Kathy Knight, Hitome Ikuma and White Eagle.
- **Behind the scenes:** Written and directed by George Coates.
- **Tickets:** $12 to $20. Call (213) 410-1062.

Herald Examiner
7/10/86

George Coates' 'RAREAREA' to play at the Doolittle

George Coates' Performance Works' "RAREAREA" returns to Los Angeles in an expanded production at the Doolittle Theater in Hollywood on Aug. 5

The production is scheduled to run through Aug. 24, and previews Aug. 2-3.

"RAREAREA" was commissioned for presentation at the Kaai Theater Festival in Europe and received its world premiere in Brussels, Belgium, in May 1985. Last October, the production appeared for one night at UCLA's Royce Hall.

For information, call (213) 462-6666.

STAGE WATCH

Coates' 'Rare Area' Becomes 'RareArea'; No 'Nick' Hot-Tix; LBCLO Goes 'Sunday in the Park With George'

Los Angeles Times
7/10/86

YLVIE DRAKE,
es Theater Writer

the nebulousness of perform-
ance art has a great virtue, it is
hat it allows the artist com-
e freedom—especially the free-
to perfect.

hat is to a great extent what
Francisco's George Coates, a
tive pioneer in the field, be-
es he has done with his stun-
"Rare Area," an extension of
George Coates Performance
ks "How Trilogy" that in-
es "The Way of How," "Are
" and "Seehear."

Rare Area" (now subtitled
e New Music Theatre Specta-
) made a one-night appearance
October at Royce Hall, UCLA,
n it was still spelled as one
d: "RareArea." It returns as
("Rare Area"), in a new,
roved version, Aug. 5-24, at the
little Theatre.

I like to think that we've fin-
d it," Coates said, Tuesday from
Francisco, "and made rather
or alterations. We've put in a
floating band 16 feet off the
r. It appears and disappears
ughout the performance.

We're creating a different at-
sphere for the 'Rare Area.' The
sic (by Paul Dresher) has been
irely reorchestrated for live
formance. We've changed some
he language to create a more
esive sociopolitical connection
h the dream world and we
ually have a speaking scene now
ween our mime (Hitomi Ikuma)
the Speaking Man."

he longer run at the Doolittle is
ring leap for a form not yet sure
s audience. The public at UCLA
loved the show, but will this
ater of startling sounds and
ges, more evocative than pro-
ative, find three weeks worth of
nstream aficionados?

We'd love to consolidate the
ience that we have in Los
geles," Coates said, acknowl-
ing some anxiety. And yet, if
tha Clarke's "Garden of Earth-
Delights" gathered a following,
not "Rare Area"?

□

NICK" NIXES HOT-TIX: Well,
se half-price day-of-perform-
e Hot Tix for "Nicholas Nickle-
" annóunced here last Thursday
med like a great idea.

h yeah? The policy lasted all of
Sunday. Ahmanson artistic
ector Robert Fryer said the
tchboard was "flooded by phone
ls from angry patrons" who had
d full admission and resented
one else getting in for less, even
ugh it was only the $50 and $30
ts that were being discounted.

We don't buy the excuse. Sub-scribers and patrons with reservations are not eligible for Hot-Tix anyway and it's unlikely many of them would have been standing in line on the day of performance to take their chances. The idea was to sell *unsold* seats. Too bad producers couldn't see it that way.

A letter from a wise friend, meanwhile, suggested that not everyone may be aware that ticket prices for "Nick/Nick" cover *both* halves of the performance. In other words, a $100 ticket breaks down to $50 for Part I and $50 for Part II.

Perhaps those who hadn't understood this will now feel that they're getting a bargain after all. The sad part is that "Nickleby" remains an unparalleled experience at any of those prices.

□

TO MOVE OR NOT TO MOVE: While "The Wonder Years" (which was not a Waiver production in the first place) moves into the Coronet Friday, three top Waiver musicals in town have decided to stay put—more or less.

"Nite Club Confidential," a send-up of '40s B movies, remains anchored at the Tiffany.

"The company may go to San Francisco in the fall, leaving another company to continue in L.A.," said producer Steve Gideon, "but, at the moment, we're not planning any other moves."

"Berlin to Broadway With Kurt Weill" closes Saturday at the Zephyr. "We're putting together a new company for San Francisco," said director Paul Hough, "but we gave up the idea of a move in town.

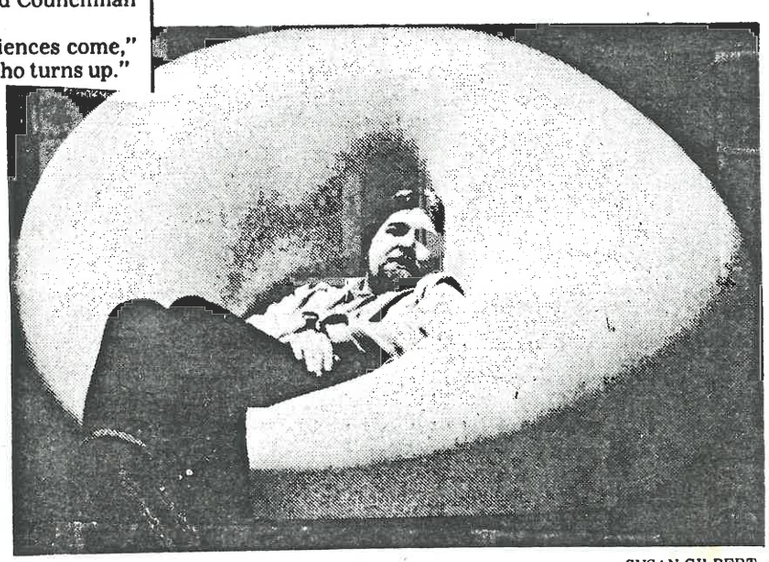
"After a year and a half, with so many people having already seen the show, we decided we might not be able to survive."

As for "Back Home" at the Cast, it continues there through Aug. 31.

"We're talking to a few people about moving," allowed composer/lyricist/performer Kirby Tepper, "but I don't think it would be productive to discuss it now."

Meanwhile, producers have approached a number of celebrities to do cameo appearances in the show—among them, Tommy Lasorda, Lu Leonard and Councilman Michael Woo.

"We're hoping audiences come," Tepper said, "to see who turns up."



SUSAN GILBERT

George Coates, performance art pioneer, snuggles into

Palisadian Post August 19, 1986

News and Reviews

Two one-acts

Two one-act plays are currently offered at the Ensemble Studio Theatre of Los Angeles, 1089 Oxford Avenue (1 block east of Western at Santa Monica Boulevard), part of 50 nights of one-acts the theater will produce through the end of September.

This is in the tradition of the theater's New York branch, which has been hosting a marathon of such plays for nine years. Ensemble Studio Theatre New York introduced the acclaimed one-act play "Sister Mary Ignatius Explains it All For You," by Christopher Durang, to the American theater-going public.

Of the two mini-productions being staged at the Oxford Avenue theater now, Jose Rivera's "Angel of Mercy" is by far the stronger. Both in drama and in acting, this simple, yet gripping, tale of a young mother about to perform an unconscionable act succeeds.

Kate Randolph Burns, as the poor, Appalachian mother convinced she must make a choice between her out-of-wedlock baby and her absent husband, churns out a tour de force performance not easily forgotten. The script is by turns subtle, humorous, and finally pathetic, but never allows the audience to become embarrassed with pity.

"Woman Meets Vulture at the L.A. Zoo," by John Schwarz, is based on a poem by Randall Jarrell and probably should stay in written form, where the reader can visualize the fantasy. Unless staged elaborately, it's hard to see how this play can overcome the obstacles.

Although the actors make valiant attempts at their roles, the woman, played by Carolyn Allport, is just too thin a character, while the vulture, played by Scanlon Gail, is too laughable. He jumps around in a football helmet (perhaps because they have him perched above the audience?) and tries to make vulture sounds while spouting poetry. Ack!

Still, it is refreshing to see productions that take chances on new and different material. You win some and you lose some. The plays run Thursday through Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 7 p.m. until August 17. Tickets are $7 ($5 for seniors and students) and reservations can be made by calling 466-2916.

By Cindy Frazier

"Rare Area"

George Coates Performance Works' "Rare Area" opened last week to the hurrahs of the opening night audience. It will be playing at the James A. Doolittle Theater through August 24. Coates is a wizard at fusing together music, visual imagery, mime and vocal virtuosity.

This is a transcending theatrical experience filled with fast moving images highlighted by the vocal score. The actors sing and appear to float as they arise and descend. The five-piece orchestra also appears to float, disappear and reappear. The mime, Hitome Ikuma, performs a dance of joy, then suddenly appears to be suspended high up on a tall building. All of the images are quite magical and emerge in rapid succession.

"Rare Area" has a story line in which the characters exist in a dream-like state enabling them to interact without regard to the laws of gravity. The metaphors are constructed visually and are greatly enhanced by Marc Ream's score. Set design and projections are by Jerome Sirlin.

The one hour, fifteen minute performances are at 8 p.m. on Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday evenings ($20, $17, $14). Friday and Saturday evenings at 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. ($22, $19, $16) and on Sunday matinees at 3 p.m. when all seats are $12. The Doolittle Theater is located at 1615 North Vine in Hollywood. For charge-by-phone tickets call 410-1062.

By Grace Hiney

LOS ANGELES HERALD EXAMINER
Sunday
August 10, 1986

CLICK

Performance-art lovers have a party for a 'Rare Area'

By Kevin Allman
Herald society editor

An improbable mix of celebrities and artists made for a fun evening last week when "Rare Area," a new production from the George Coates Performance Works, opened at the James A. Doolittle Theater in Hollywood. Any gathering that gets Jack Carter and Tawny Little mingling with a coterie of L.A.'s best-known artists has got to be unusual.

Unusual, of course, is a term most often applied to Coates' abstract multimedia spectacles, which were on display last year at UCLA's Royce Hall. At Royce, both "Rare Area" and an earlier work, "Seehear," expanded the Coates appeal in Los Angeles, and the presentation of "Rare Area" at the Doolittle should be a good bid for an even broader audience.

The scaffolds that permanently hug the Doolittle were awash in white light as a crowd of paparazzi, autograph seekers and ticket holders scurried around the entrance to the theater. Speculation and anticipation were keen; after all, an audience has a pretty good idea of what they'll see at, say, "On Your Toes," but the only thing predictable about "Rare Area" was its unpredictability.

The audience stopped the show several times with its applause, and the four actors received a healthy ovation when the performance concluded. Behind-the-scenes maestro Coates was brought on-stage as well, and the crowd responded with some more lusty hand-clapping.

After the show, everyone headed for the foyer and upstairs lobby (now hung with Laddie John Dill's plywood-and-concrete creations), where a reception/party was getting under way. Art gallery food — grapes, strawberries and the *de rigueur* white wine in plastic cups — was plentiful, which should have made the creative types feel right at home.

Lee Salem

Dorothy Maguire was among the guests at the opening night of George Coates' "Rare Area."

Lee Salem

David Hedison and Alexis Smith found themselves surrounded by fans and autograph seekers outside the Doolittle Theater.

Pamela Weir-Quiton got the nod for sartorial creativity, with a pair of ultraslim wraparound glasses and a leather coat with spiked shoulders and sleeves. One guest asked, "Is that a stegosaurus or an allosaurus?" (Neither; it was an artosaurus.)

The outspoken Joan Quinn was out the door before anyone barely saw her, much less got her opinion on the show, but other art-world types were glad to stay and linger, like Peter Alexander; Ed Moses; Don Bachardy; David, Joan and Robert Hertz; Frank Romero; Eric Orr; Robert Graham; Lita Albuquerque; Linda Albertano; Penny Milford; and Guy Dill.

The performance-art lovers in attendance included Tawny Little (now a redhead), Jack Carter, Joe Spano, Jack Larson, Wendy Stark, Esther Williams, Candace and Robert Culp, Jay Bernstein, Candy Clark, Pamela Mason, Rudy Perez, Dorothy Maguire, Barbara Chase, Jeanette and Vidal Sassoon, David Hedison and Alexis Smith.

Coates was surrounded by hand-pumpers and well-wishers when he made his appearance, and he was optimistic that the three-week run of "Rare Area" in the comparatively large Doolittle Theater would do well. And, on opening night at least, there was nothing to dispel that optimism.

(more)

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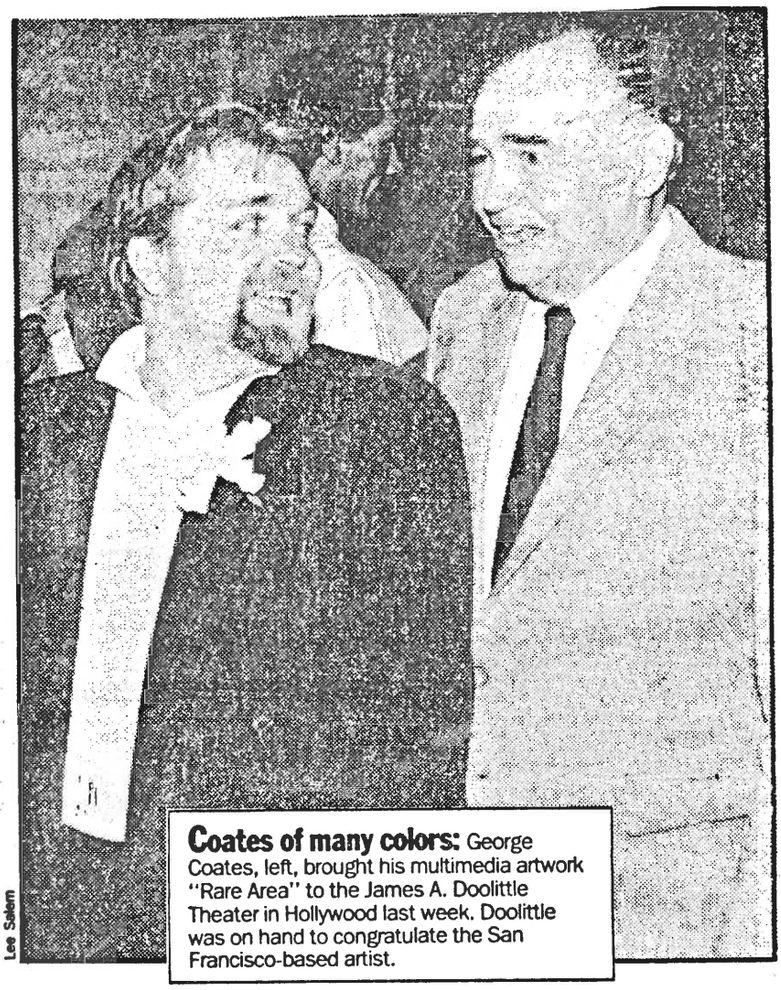


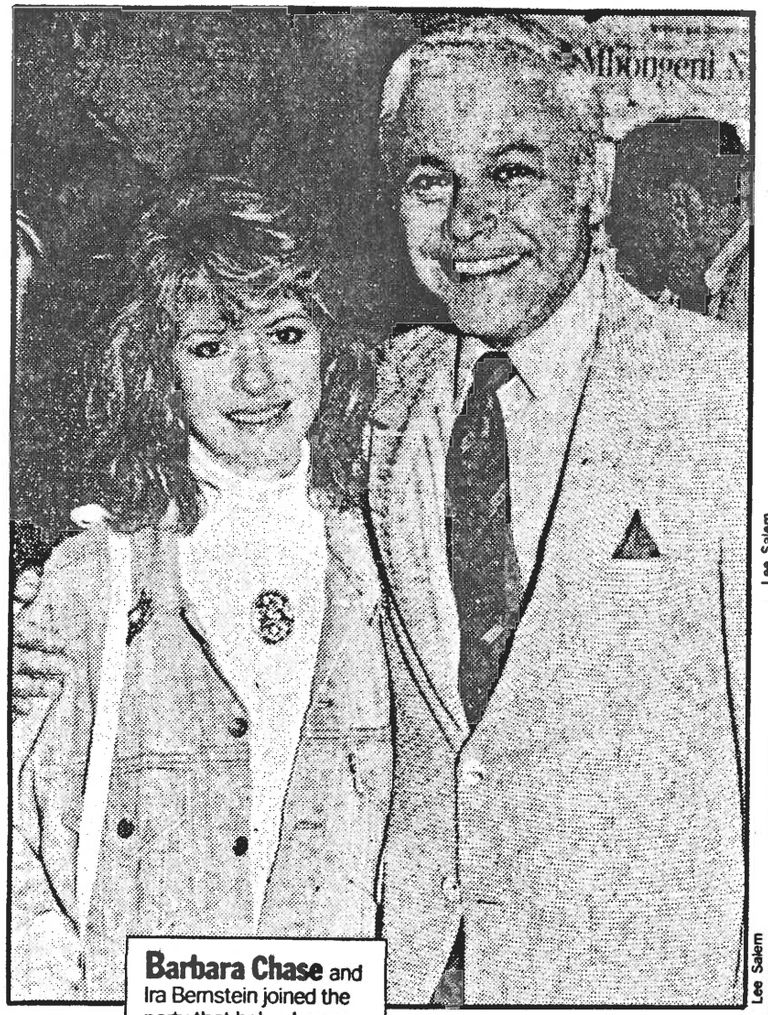
Lee Salem

Coates of many colors: George Coates, left, brought his multimedia artwork "Rare Area" to the James A. Doolittle Theater in Hollywood last week. Doolittle was on hand to congratulate the San Francisco-based artist.

Lee Salem

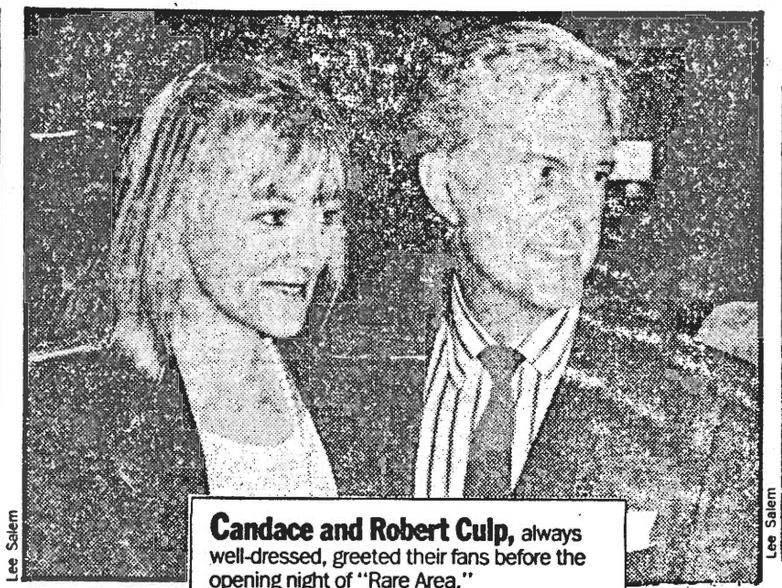
Artosaurus: That was the term one guest used for Pamela Weir-Quiton's unusual jacket at the opening of "Rare Area."

(more)



Lee Salem

Barbara Chase and Ira Bernstein joined the party that helped open "Rare Area" last week at the Doolittle Theater.

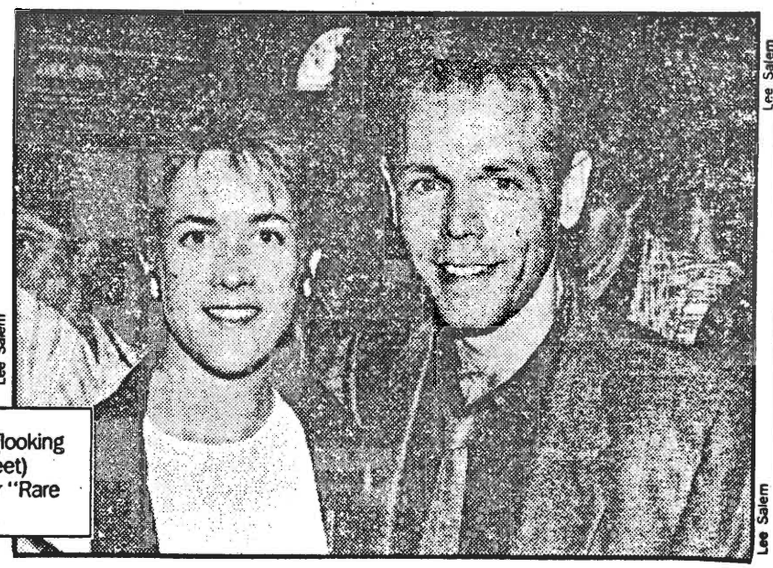


Lee Salem

Candace and Robert Culp, always well-dressed, greeted their fans before the opening night of "Rare Area."

Lee Salem

Anne Kresl and Robert Graham were there when the art world met Hollywood last week at the premiere of "Rare Area."



Lee Salem

Joan and Joe Spano (looking more Melrose than Hill Street) made the party scene after "Rare Area."

Lee Salem

Hair Area: Vidal and Jeanette Sassoon paused for a photograph on their way into the Doolittle Theater.

THE Hollywood REPORTER

5th year | Hollywood | Monday, August 11, 1986 | Vol. CCXCIII, No. 13 | 75 Cents

'Rare Area'

Doolittle Theater
1615 N. Vine
Closes Aug. 24

By ROBERT W. PETERSON

An interesting crowd was on hand for the opening night of George Coates' self-described "new music theater spectacle" titled "Rare Area" at the Doolittle Theater last week.

Also billed as a "performance work," the show drew a curious crowd composed of "artistic" men wearing pony-tailed greased back hair and wrinkled, baggy clothing, and "artistic" women wearing silk Nehru jackets and smoking unfiltered cigarettes. They all arrived 20 minutes late for the performance, continued to seat themselves 20 minutes into the show and then spent the remaining 50 minutes of the performance exiting and re-entering the theater.

This was not a regular theater going audience, and Coates' work is not by any means, a "regular" piece of theater.

One suspects that Coates would reject the artsy-craftsy-intellectualism presumably exhibited by dress and manners of the opening-night audience that eschewed anything that might seem conformist. Indeed, conformity is in some ways what "Rare Area" is all about. Coates defies the conformity of theatrical expectations.

With its images of walls as objects that confine space and define boundaries, and its repeated use of flags as symbols of patriotism and nationalism, this performance work is full of social and cultural landmarks of conformity.

Coates works something like the proverbial child in a candy store. A visual genius surrounded by the means to indulge himself, he runs wild, attempting to include everything: visuals, dance, music, drama, acting, flying, pictures, lights, dazzling costumes, singing and comedy. Put it all together and it will speak. But does it? "Rare Area" does offer moments that seem to be connected and driven by Coates' vision and direction. But what is a grand idea if you can't convey it?

Coates, so determined to find "a new theater" seems trapped in a straitjacket that dictates fantastic visuals and tricks for their own sake.

Whether it is hung upon the Doolittle's stage like a painting or rather hoisted — as in hoist by one's own petard — is open to debate. No question that it is a visually stunning piece with beautiful and expressive music, a sort of rock score composed of echoes of both the music of the East and the West, and an appropriate theatricality.

But "Rare Area" remains something of a mystery, appealing as it does to people who think alike and are adamantly against things like structure, authority and conformity.

KCSN
NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO
88.5 FM
(818) 885-3090

"Rare Area" presents the world's frenzy in slow motion, providing a feast for the eyes and a banquet for the soul. Voices, instruments, tools, gadgets, photographs, fabric, etc. are united to form a work of modern art that soars.

It is difficult to stay seated in the audience. I wanted to join in the fun, sliding on the ramps, hopping up and down as Spider Man. I have to settle for playing with my slide projector. But I shall never use it as just that again. Juxtaposing slides will be great fun, and projecting them on my window blinds will reveal new sights. I can hardly wait.

As a commentary on the past, present and future, "Rare Area" leaves this viewer grateful for the stimulation. R"are Area" lasts but sixty sight-filled minutes, enough time, however, to see lightning strike, blending all that exists into a bewildering essence.

airing at 6:30, Aug 12

Barbara Sylvia, "Valley Video" Tuesday, August 12, 1986

California State University, Northridge
18111 Nordhoff Street, Northridge, CA 91330

NOTICIAS
del MUNDO

MIERCOLES 13 de AGOSTO de 1986, página 7B

RAREAREA

Por Jorge Luis Rodríguez
NOTICIAS DEL MUNDO

De George Coates se ha dicho muy acertadamente que mezcla lo clásico con lo moderno del arte, pero el éxito de sus experiencias escénicas radica en esa comunicación sensorial afín a todas las artes, que en Coates adquiere la máscara avant-garde de la sofisticación intelectual, de lo incomprensible.

RAREAREA es el octavo resultado del "performance" elevado por Coates a su máxima teatralidad y elaboración musical; al mismo tiempo, los planteamientos visuales que logra con objetos y formas apoyadas en sombras definen una atmósfera tridimensional cinematográfica, donde el espacio se comporta de acuerdo al ángulo visual del espectador.

Desde 1979 "George Coates Performance Works" viene operando en sus estudios de Berkeley, California, trabajando en coordinación con el Museo de Arte Moderno de San Francisco, así como en el Zellerbach Hall y otras salas en Norteamérica. Sus giras han comprendido funciones en Polonia, Holanda, Bélgica, Francia, Inglaterra, Alemania y España.

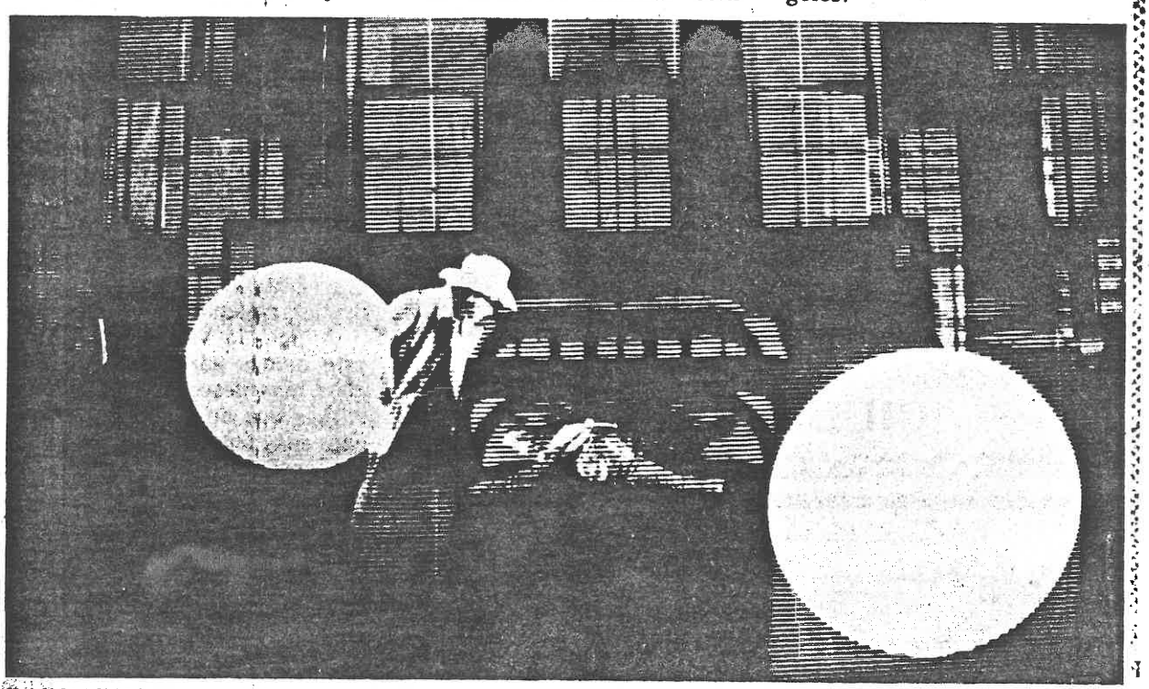
Cuatro actores y una banda de cinco integrantes ejecutan esta fantasía espacial donde la percepción sustituye a la narrativa y la historia se refleja sin un argumento específico. RAREAREA trata sobre el poder, el poder político, el místico, el individual, la fuerza de la violencia, la inteligencia y la estupidez.

La escenografía y el diseño de proyecciones son de Jerome Sirlin; los tenores John Duykers y White Eagle alternan al igual que las sopranos Kathryn Neale, Fabienne y Kathy Knight.

La creación musical compuesta por Marc Ream parte de un concepto operático que se desarrollará en el mismo sentido expansivo que toda la producción. El actor Sean Kilkoyne y el arte mímico de Hitomi Ikuma se integran corporalmente al espacio figurativo.

El resultado ha de ser perfecto, en la limpieza de cada detalle radica la consumación artístico-técnica del espectáculo, que pese a su nivel de abstracción no deja de tener un sentido manual de realización, como si las ideas fuesen siempre trazadas con un fino pincel en vez de programadas en computadoras. Pese a la elaboración técnica de RAREAREA, el resultado artístico sobrepasa con creces cualquier apreciación.

RAREAREA se presentará solamente durante otras dos semanas en el Teatro James A. Doolittle de la ciudad de Los Angeles.



RAREAREA es un viaje mental desde la ancestral Mesoamérica hasta las torres de San Francisco, sorteando los huecos negros del espacio y los abismos del poder monárquico, entre los continuos devaríos sociales del hombre.

The Great Life

George Christy

"Didn't avant garde go into hiding in the '60s after Charlotte Moreman played the cello while flying nude in a hot air balloon?" wondered London visitor Jason Pollock during the performance of "Rare Area" at the James Doolittle Theater in Hollywood. Jason was among the observers of this arty performance works produced by George Coates. "Pretentious" was Jason's decree, and neither did artists Peter Alexander, Bob Graham and Hally Miller cotton to it — Peter Alexander describes it as "a load of you-know-what." But contemporary art dealer Margo Leavin loved it, and art maven Elyse Grinstein was responsible for corraling the art crowd that included Camilla and Earl McGrath. On hand were Ira Bernstein, MoCA trustees Joan and Fred Nicholas, Dorothy McGuire, David Hedison, Alexis Smith, Scott Spiegel, Don Bachardy, Candace and Bob Culp, Wendy Stark, Merry and Bill Norris, Jim Bridges, Jack Larson, the Mark Taper's Gordon Davidson and his publicist wife Judi, who live in that historic house in Santa Monica Canyon, where Salka Viertel entertained Thomas Mann and often had Garbo as her houseguest. London visitor Jason Pollock, the show business editor for "Good Morning Britain," noted that he's here for another week lining up talent. "Good Morning Britain," he informs, is a smashing success, netting 20 million pounds during the past year — it's a three hour and 10 minute daily program, and a division of David Frost's "TV AM" corporation that produces other morning programs ("After Nine," plus a children's show and the program David Frost hosts each Sunday). Tearing away from the vagaries of "Rare Area," which has been acclaimed in San Francisco (but, then, San Francisco and Los Angeles *are* two different countries), Jason Pollock high-tailed it over to the Hollywood Roosevelt's Cinegrill to catch Julie Wilson singing the songs of Cole Porter. Julie's the sophisticated singer with the dimple in her voice, and she moves sinuously in George Karr's black lace-and-fringe — not unlike a paw-stretching cat nuzzling against a lover. She sang such favorites as "My Heart Belongs to Daddy" (which propelled Mary Martin to stardom in "Leave It to Me"), mood-spinning medleys, even Cole Porter's favorite "I Am Loved" from "Out of This World," and his most-famous "dropped" song from that same musical — "From This Moment On." Between love ballads, she frolics — and acts out the witty lyrics within "The Queen of Terre Haute" ("why couldn't I have been Salome, or Mary Pickford, or Joan of Arc/If I were Elinor Glyn, or even Anne Boleyn/My future wouldn't seem half so dark/Why couldn't I be Whistler's mother/or any other woman of note? Why did the gods decree/that I would only be/the Queen of Terre Haute?"). She winks through Cole's ode to the bivalve social climber, "Tale of the Oyster" (which Cole wrote when Helen Broderick complained that she didn't have enough material in "50 Million Frenchmen") — about the oyster that "had a taste of society, and society has had a taste of me." Cradled in a white coq feather boa, Julie goes bluesy with Marlene Dietrich's camp-classic from "Stage Fright" — "it's not that I wouldn't, and not that I shouldn't, and Lord knows it's not that I couldn't — it's simply because I'm the laziest gal in town." This week Julie continues singing the songs of Cole Porter for her first show at 9 o'clock, then a Stephen Sondheim repertoire for her second show at 11. Next week, she'll sing Rodgers and Hart. Lennie Bleecher and Kathleen Beck, who are presenting Julie during this Cinegrill engagement, note that she's been extended for two weeks, through Aug. 30. She returns Sept. 23 to the Oak Room at the Algonquin and in February will be at the Ritz Hotel in London. Her accompanist, as always, is the delightful Billy Roy. Her favorite singer, she admitted during an interval, is Billie Holiday, and it's only fitting that she's weaving together a program of Billie's songs, also an evening of Julie Sings the Sirens (such film seductresses as Rita Hayworth, Mae West, Marlene Dietrich, Marilyn Monroe, Dorothy Lamour). Among Julie's fans in the audience were Allan Carr, Fran Jeffries, couturier James Galanos, Gustave Tassell, director John Bohab, vocal coach David Bright, Esther Williams, Tony Award-winning playwright Tom Eyen, who'll direct his $5 million Broadway-bound musical, "Kicks," about a Rockettes-like dance group in New York. Tom's written the book and lyrics, as he did for "Dreamgirls," and the music's by Alan Menken. "The musical spans three wars — World War II, the Korean and Vietnam wars," offers Tom, who's here to catch Susan Tyrrell in the Equity-waiver production of that cult classic, "Why Hanna's Skirt Won't Stay Down," which takes place in a Coney Island funhouse and opened last night at the Coast Playhouse — Gregory Harrison's Catalina Productions is producing it. Purportedly the role of Hanna inspired Bette Midler to create the wisecracking Divine Miss M character. Helen Hanft originated the role at the time that Bette was acting in another Tom Eyen playette, "Miss Nefertiti Regrets."

Executive producer Roger Gimbel with Lesley Ann Warren and Home Box Office senior vp Rick Bieber during screening at Directors Guild of "Apology," in which Lesley Ann stars with Peter Weller, above; HBO's Richard Waltzer and wife Kathryn, below left; Jennifer Warren (Mrs. Roger Gimbel) and Susan Dey, below center; Maggie Schmidt and John Glover, below right

HBO's Richard Licata and wife Toni, below; Grammy winning songwriter Allee Willis, right; Carol Warren is the mother of Lesley Ann Warren, bottom right

Songbird Julie Wilson was reminiscing with Connie Wald about her first appearance in Los Angeles at the Mocambo in 1948 — Connie Wald's brother Barron Polan booked Julie there, with Connie loaning her a Norman Norell gown. "The Mocambo was marvelous, there were tropical birds — macaws and such — behind a glass partition ... it was on the Strip near the Sunset Plaza area," offered Connie during the luncheon she hosted for Julie, where Jean Howard and Tony Santoro admired Connie's enormous roses that filled the house — one rosebush teeming with massive white blossoms on Connie's terrace is over 10 feet tall. "And it's in a pot!" exclaimed Loretta Young, who chatted about turning down the role of the elder Mrs. Grenville in "The Two Mrs. Grenvilles" — "I told Lorimar that I liked the book, but that I had to see a screenplay. In the book, St. James Church figures considerably with the family, but in the screenplay the church was gone, and my character turned out to be a crabby mean old lady, which I had predicted." Harriet and Ardie Deutsch talked about returning to the Hollywood Roosevelt's Cinegrill to hear Julie Wilson sing Cole Porter — Ardie recalled hearing Julie in the Maisonette Room at the St. Regis Hotel. Julie herself was elated that her son Holt was being screentested that day for a role in "After School," while Frances Bergen and Jim Wharton praised Connie's luncheon of capellini with fresh tomato and basil, vitello tonnato, a platter of fresh fruits that included peaches, figs, blueberries and raspberries. After dessert, Janet de Cordova shared the story of friends being on a movie set with Mel Brooks, who had a dog following him. "What's the dog's name?" they asked. "Puke," answered Mel, only to have an associate correct him. "No, Mel, it's Barf." Then, Bill Frye recalled when the Academy Awards were presented at the Pantages Theater. "After the ceremony, the stars' limousines were announced as a convenience to the celebrities. 'Jack Warner's car,' the announcer bellowed that evening, followed by 'Deborah Kerr's car' that was followed by 'Alfred Hitchcock's cock!' Nobody batted an eyelash. Maybe they didn't hear him."

Beginning next week, George Christy's "The Great Life" will appear Tuesdays (instead of Wednesdays), Thursdays and Fridays.

CAA's Rick Nicita, above left; Frank Konigsberg, HBO vp Ilene Kahn and Larry Sanitsky, above

Paul Pelletieri

KCRW Broadcast, August 14, 1986

This is Robert Windeler, with Thoughts on Theatre.

Musicals continue to be a staple of summer openings. This week, we have one that is ageless, one that is about and for a specific age group--and a third that could only have been created as a compendium of our immediate age. "Peter Pan" has been a crowd-pleaser since 1904; it is once again, in Long Beach. "The Wonder Years" pleased so many crowds at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel that it has been moved to the Coronet Theatre. "Rare Area" is pleasing enough in its expanded return L.A. engagement, at the Doolittle, to portend the musicals of the future. For lovers of traditional Broadway show tunes for adults, Julie Wilson is singing two shows a night at the Cinegrill, speaking of the reburbished Hollywood Roosevelt.

"Peter Pan" wasn't a musical when Sir James Barrie wrote it, and it was first produced just after the turn of the century. It became one in 1954, making Mary Martin both the biggest star on Broadway and the toast of live TV specials. As a child, it was thrilling to see Martin flying across the screen, even within the confines of a ten-inch black-and-white Philco. Martin's musical version was revived six years ago, on Broadway and in a tour that included Los Angeles. New generations were charmed. Cathy Rigby is the star of the Long Beach Civic Light Opera version, a full-flying production that will be at the Terrace Theatre through August 24. It will then go to Santa Barbara, with Broadway's "Annie" Andrea McCardle in the lead instead of Rigby, but otherwise intact. Rigby sings well, moves gracefully, like the athlete she is--although she grazed the scenery a few times while flying on opening night, which might not have been her fault. She's perky, and otherwise competent, without bringing any special individuality to the part, as Martin and Duncan did. There probably are audience members alive who remember Maud Adams as Peter in the straight play, or Jean Arthur in the 1950 production, with incidental music by Leonard Bernstein. But more than any one person, it's the material itself that is magical: Barrie's story of the boy from NeverNeverland who won't grow up, and the three Darling children, who finally must. Mark Charlap's melodies, and Carolyn Leigh's lyrics enhance the

magic. Most of the elements in this Long Beach mounting, under Toby Bluth's direction, are first-class: John Schuck is a suitably villanous Captain Hook, and a doting Mr. Darling. Marsha Kramer's Wendy is a standout, as are Michael Hottop and Paul de Pass's sets, and Bill Hargate's costumes. My one big criticism is of the Terrace Theatre's sound system, which may be inadequate to this high-flying production. Anyone sitting on the sides of the orchestra may have trouble hearing the spoken words, although this is less true for the lyrics and music. A few more well-placed speakers would not go amiss.

"The Wonder Years" is so specifically of its era, the Baby Boomer generation, that it's hard to see how anyone not born between 1946 and 1959 would really enjoy its gentle satire of the 50s, 60s and 70s. David Levy's music and lyrics are deliberately derivative of those decades, and you had to have been there--and at the right age--to "get" the four-author libretto. The six-member cast is attractive and energetic, with Stephen Breithaupt a performer of grace and versatility. Those are two qualities that "The Wonder Years," overall, lacks. It's a linear run-through, with no particular point of view except to say vaguely that the 60s had a social conscience and its sort of too bad that we've lost that. The rest of the show is rather too heavily reliant on audience recollection: as if merely reminding us of Howdy Doody or Mamie Eisenhower were enough. Not only is this musical's hymn to the 70s a series of mi-mi-mi syllables, which we get after the second one--the libretto feels compelled to explain the joke again, after the song.

It's difficult to explain "Rare Area" on the radio, it's so much a visual piece of performance art. Its ethereal music has lyrics that are only gibberish syllables, even if they seem more profound than mi-mi-mi. Like "Peter Pan," whose Tinker Belle is laser beams, "Rare Area" employs magical lighting, and flying. In this case, the five-piece orchestra floats some 15 feet above the stage. Dance, movies, mime and sound effects are the other elements in this hour-long piece of moving artwork put together by George Coates and company. It's stunning to look at, [redacted]

[redacted] and may just be the shape of things to come.

Julie Wilson, whose Cinegrill engagement has been extended through August 30th, is more in the tradition of show music past--but what a past! A New York cabaret singer, in the best sense of the word, Wilson is sleekly figured in midnight blue sequins and a gardenia over her ear. It's hard to believe that 30 years have passed since she first started singing in supper clubs. With only the stylish William Roy at the piano--and singing on a couple of duets--her own innate taste, uncanny lyric sense and a slightly throaty delivery that is still as sleek as her figure, Wilson finds new meaning in even the most familiar material. She devotes each hour-long set to the work of a single Broadway composer. Last night I saw her Stephen Sondheim set, with the tastiest material from "Company," "Follies," "A Little Night Music," "Anyone Can Whistle" and "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum." Particular treats include the underrated title song from "Do I Hear a Waltz?"--with its Sondheim lyrics and music by Richard Rodgers--"I Never Do Anything Twice," from "The Seven Percent Solution," and all the great female songs from "Follies." You may have heard it all before, but you've never heard Sondheim the way Julie Wilson sings him. I can't wait to go back and catch her Cole Porter.

This is Robert Windeler, with Thoughts on Theatre.

BARBARA WILKINS

The tenor and the soprano seemed to be royalty, and there seemed to be an assassin. But, enough. What crossed our mind was that it couldn't be easy to sing upside down, and we left it at that.

Just when it seems that there is nothing new under the sun—nothing to titillate, surprise, much less shock—some odd fact turns up which does all of the above, and more. And so it was a few years back when Sandi West, the oil heiress who died at the age of 37, exhibited what we thought was a fine lunacy when she stipulated in her will that she was to be buried, sitting up, in the Ferrari she so dearly loved. Like many others, we were fascinated as we followed the story in the papers and on the evening news as her bizarre stipulation made its way through the courts. Well, the courts didn't know what to make of it any more than anyone else did, so Sandi West's request prevailed, and her will was done.

Now, Sandi West is with us again, this time in a painting entitled, "Sandi West and the Pink Flamingoes," in which she wears only pink diamonds, by her great friend, Bill Jack, as part of the show currently on view at the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery at Barnsdall Park, "Hollywood—Inside and Out." "Sandi had an income of $120,000 a month, and she was very generous with it," the artist explained to John & Bunny Gottlieb at the cocktail reception earlier at Frank Lloyd Wright's Hollyhock House, also in the Barnsdall complex. "She was always giving me Bulgari bracelets, Celine belt buckles, watches, rings—everything. She told me that if I would marry her, she would make me a prince. Well, I didn't see how she could pull that off. And, everybody always thought that Sandi came from some exotic background. She didn't. She was a nice, little girl from Beverly Hills. Her parents ran a children's store there."

Later, more than a thousand art buffs turned up to listen to the jazz and rock bands alternating in front of the gallery, and to examine the works of 21 artists, ranging from Andy Warhol's multiple images of Liz Taylor and Marilyn Monroe, Don Bachardy's drawings of Sir Alec Guinness, Terri Garr and Evelyn Keyes, among others; Ed Ruscha's "Hollywood," to Penny Wolin's, "Guest Register," a photographic documentation of the lost souls at the St. Francis Hotel on Hollywood Boulevard. Among those sipping the lethal punch and wandering through the many rooms, some featuring installations by Simone Gad, were Berte Fink and her husband, Hy, the former head of Akron, who gave it all up to become a sculptor; Edward Goldman, Don BaChardy, George Maharis, Samson de Brier, Josine Ianco-Starrels, Gloria Tanzini, with her actor son, Phillip; Marilyn Stewart, who had driven up from her home in Newport Beach; Raquel Fitzpatrick, in town from Puerto Vallarta; Jerry Jacoby, Countess Milou de Reiset, Phillip Spalding, Pamela Fong, who was, reported to be for years, the girlfriend (ha, ha) of former governor Jerry Brown; Bunny & Ken Schrieber, and Salome, the German painter, who is noted for his series of paintings of surfers.

And, all of that was fairly straightforward stuff, compared to what was going on a few miles west at the James A. Doolittle Theatre, where a packed house wasn't even vaguely aware of what was going on, although it, clearly, was something. It even has a name, which is, *Rare Area*, and it even has a description, which is, "George Coates Performance Works," and a genesis which included rave reviews at its premiere at the Kaai Festival in Brussels last year, subsequent performances in Berkeley, and, last October, UCLA's Royce Hall, and, eventually, a three-month sold-out run in San Francisco, where it set new records for experimental musical theatre. On stage, musicians appeared and disappeared, hovering above the other four performers, who in turn, seemed to float above the stage. The tenor and the soprano seemed to be royalty, and there seemed to be an assassin. But, enough. What crossed our mind was that it couldn't be easy to sing upside down, and we left it at that.

And, if it were bizarre and unusual on the stage, it was also bizarre and unusual in the audience where an eclectic mixture drawn from the worlds of art, theatre, politics, society, and God-knows-where-else viewed the goings on with some alarm. Mixing and mingling and trying to decipher what they had just seen at the party afterwards were Jack & Joanie Quinn, Joan & Fred Nicholas, Margo Leavin, Dan Saxon, Robert Berman, Penny Little, Michele De Puy, Robert Graham, the artist, with his wife, Ann; Peter Alexander, the artist, with his wife, Halli, who no longer uses her last name; Vidal & Jeanette Sassoon, Jay Bernstein, Pamela Weir-Quiton, the artist, in dark glasses with slits and the most peculiar jacket we have ever seen—red with humps on the shoulders and down the sleeves, reminiscent of the humps on those rubber dinosaurs we played with as a child; Linda Albertano and Lita Albuquerque, Frank & Nancy Romero, and Ira Bernstein, general manager of the Shubert Theatre, who was still talking about the wildly successful Dodger Night at, *Cats*, where nine of the team's top players turned out to sign autographs and catch the show, which we are now convinced, will run forever. The art on the walls of the Doolittle these days, incidentally, is by Laddie John Dill, who, we suspect, was the only artist that night who was home working instead of out-and-about like everybody else. At some point during the party, while everybody munched on the vegies, pate, quiche and chili, while balancing their drinks, George Coates, looking boyish and worried, a gardenia in his buttonhole, questioned whether the enthusiasm of the audience was what it seemed. "George," said Gordon Davidson, who was also in attendance, "Men were even talking about it in the *restroom*."

We recall feeling a sense of awe all those years ago when we first walked into the Jeu de Paume in the Tuilleries in Paris and saw on canvas, if not actually in the flesh, for the first time, Georges Seurat's, "A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte," the pointillist's depiction of a Sunday in the park, with those women in hats and bustles, the gents in top hats, the lake, boats, trees, and a black dog regarding his tail. Well, since then, thanks to Stephen Sondheim and his Tony-award winning musical, *Sunday in the Park with Georges*, everybody has been knocking it off, including the Hollywood Bowl, which uses a graphic version of it on its program. Thus, when we received an invitation to, *Sunday in the Garden with Marilyn*, which, we instantly perceived, could only mean the Hamlet Gardens and Marilyn Lewis, we thought, "Why not?" And a gala party in the garden with Marilyn it was, with the hostess in gauzy white cotton and lace, Harry Lewis in a black jacket, white trousers, and red shoes, and a number of women in authentic turn-of-the-century garden party ensembles, with floor-length gowns and big, picture hats. Among those listening to the jazz band and nibbling on miniature hamburgers, oysters and pizzas were Tom Sewall, in black and white, Samson de Brier, Ellen Stern Harris with Frank Mullens, Jean Penn, Henry Gilles, Laura & Jim Maslon, Deanne Goldi, D.J. Hall, the artist, in a perfect period costume, with her husband, Toby Watson, the architect; and Merle Miller, the artist, with her husband, Howard.

Also around and about, British Vice Consul John Houlton and Fifi Booth were having tea at Jimmy's before leaving for England to produce a 10-part miniseries called, "Focus on Britain," while dining elsewhere were Ellen & Ian Graham with Robin & Fred Astaire.

And, we are proud to report that the Impressionist Show at LACMA drew between 6,000-7,000 a day and passed the 300,000 attendance mark during its Los Angeles stay. The same show at the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. drew just under 200,000 viewers.

Daily Breeze, Aug 15, 1986

"RARE AREA" — *Daily Variety* called this musical revue "an '80s bridge between MTV and avant garde." It's playing at 8 and 10 p.m. Fri. (also Sat.) at the James A. Doolittle Theater, 1615 N. Vine St., Hollywood: 462-6666.

Gateway U.S.A,
August 16, 1986

James A. Doolittle Theatre
1615 N. Vine St., L.A.

8月24日まで
"RARE AREA"
監督　ジョージ・コーテス
時間と料金
水、木、日曜　8 pm　$14、17、20
金、土曜　8、10pm　$16、19、22
日曜マチネー　3 pm　$12
問合せ (213) 462-6566
チケット扱い　チケットロン

The Reader
August 15, 1986

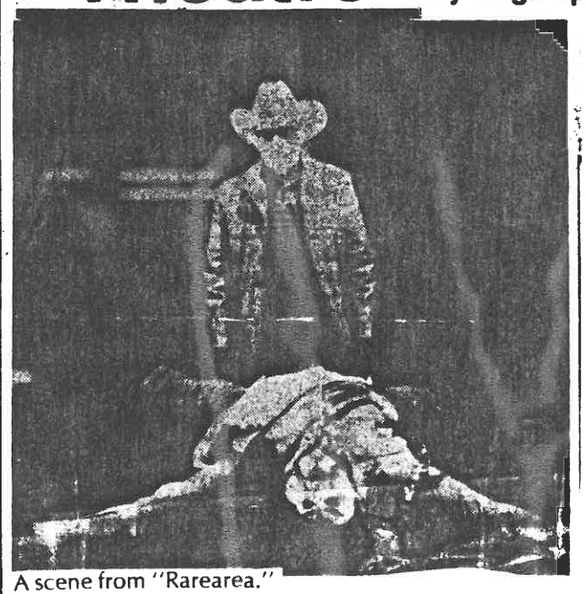
Rare Area. During the mid to late '70s, a popular if fatuous entertainment for high-schoolers and other like-minded sorts was getting a good buzz and spending an evening at "Laserium," a computerized laser light show set to a "cosmic" soundtrack of music ranging from Led Zeppelin to some of the more bombastic classical selections. *Rare Area*, the latest offering from Bay Area performance art baron George Coates, is sort of like a highbrow "Laserium." To be fair, Coates's blend of techno music, Japanese opera, dance, mime, art, and lighting [illegible]

tively necromantic; it would be interesting to see what he could do with a genuine text on the order of a baroque opera or a Hemingway short story. As it is, however, the piece fascinates mainly in the visual sense, and when the viewer tires of tripping through this dreamy universe and starts looking for substance, *Rare Area* disappoints. (Reviewed by Christina Dalton.) James A. Doolittle Theatre, 1615 Vine St, 410-1062. Weds-Thus at 8, Fris-Sats at 8 and 10, Suns at 3 and 8.

Theatre

by Leigh Spear

Singles Register
August 15, 1986



A scene from "Rarearea."

ON YOUR TOES

Continued from Page 10

As to the "original," "Rare Area," a performance work by George Coates, now on display in Hollywood at the James A. Doolittle, enough consummate good cannot be said.

Surrealistic and avan-

Surrealistic and avante garde works have come down the pike before and their nebulousness usually obfuscates me as they never seem to define any parallels.

They make their peripheral suggestion and it's over. Ooh's and aah's follow by those who fancy themselves the cognoscenti, or those who take "speed" to stay awake throughout the unendurable and yawn inspiring offering.

And by those who do not wish to seem ignorant or left out, they are exclaimed as works of art but they are really just visual persiflage.

George Coates' "Rare Area" is one of those really rare experiences that is truly a work of originality that makes a statement that is easy to understand.

It also transports one into valid thoughts about that which is really happening mixed with what has happened.

The mixing, the chanting of trained operatice voices in counterpoint to primitive rhythms that may date back to pre-Colombian times is awe-inspiring.

And the voices of John Duykers (tenor) and Kathryn Neale (soprano), were thrilling the night we caught this marvelous pastiche of the evocative, provocative and innovative.

If one wishes, "Rare Area" may be referred to as a "Twilight Zone," "Fifth Dimension" or "Outer Limits" without words.

And who is to say that these unseen parallels do not exist, especially as they are presented by George Coates with music by Marc Ream and brilliantly bizarre set designs and scenic projections by Jerome Sirlin in "Rare Area."

If Einstein's theory of relativity is true, who is to say that history, the present and the future are not happening concurrently in different dimensions?

Award-winning musical "On Your Toes."

And quite truly, are we not living today affected by yesterday with a view to change in the future? But how different is that change when we get there?

Mixed within the scope of beauty in "Rare Area," is the lethal fools who annihilate that which they cannot understand - and that brings to mind the first stanza of Wilde's "Ballad of Reading Gaol," which begins: "Yet each man kills the thing he loves the best."

We are also given the idea that those most affected by TV are too quick to give a ready title or name immediately to almost everything we see. Meaning that we have become too prone to taking things at face value.

Coates suggests that if we do not explore further we will really miss a great deal. But he suggests everything with such exquisite imagination!

You must see the touching sentiments in "Rare Area" in order to get in touch with your ethereal beauty.

L. A. Weekly
August 15-21, 1986

RARE AREA From all the hype connected with San Francisco's George Coates Performance Works, you'd think the Messiah had arrived. It's true that anyone who wants to keep up with the current arts scene should see this work. It's also true that, like Laurie Anderson and Robert Wilson, Coates' group draws large audiences for avant-garde hybrid theater. But Coates' group hasn't truly "arrived" yet. This ensemble specializes in large-scale music theater, a spectacle of image and sound. Collaboratively, it creates cinematic/sound/movement images that unfold hallucinogenically. "Rare Area," part "four" in *The Way of How* trilogy, is a meditation on "power — political, spiritual and personal." Marc Ream's polyrhythmic music, performed live, is excellent; soprano Kathryn Neal and tenor John Duykers are fine (others perform on alternate days), and the set is highly imaginative. Behind a large Levolor blind, performers appear and disappear on a sharply slanted black ramp upon and around which Jeff Hunt's tiered slide projections appear. These interesting, gravity-defying illusions are marred, however, by Larry Neff's imperfect lighting cues, which sometimes reveal the sleight-of-hand. The test for Coates' kind of visual, sensual experimentation is if you're swept into the dream without experiencing rational pooh-poohing or befuddlement. The test doesn't always work. Some sections rise to an astonishing beauty. A macho dude jousts with two slippery big balls, a puppetlike ruling couple rises from a bed of skulls, and flags recur as symbols of useless nationalism. Other parts are so druggy slo-mo that your eyelids droop. Jumps from rationality to aestheticism are still jarring, though less so than last year's performance at UCLA. James A Doolittle Theater, 1615 N. Vine St., Hlywd.; Wed.-Thurs., 8 p.m.; Fri.-Sat., 8 & 10 p.m.; Sun., 3 & 8 p.m.; thru Aug. 24. Call (213) 410-1062 or 462-6666. (Maryl Jo Fox)

August 11, 1984

DAILY VARIETY DAILY

LEGIT REVIEW

Rare Area

(Doolittle Theater; 981 seats; top $22)

Booking a performance art piece for a three-week run in a major house may be risky, but that is exactly what George Coates and his company have done with "Rare Area." The hour-and-fifteen-minute visual odyssey, termed "New Music Theater Spectacle," opened last Tuesday night at the James A. Doolittle Theater, where it is scheduled through Aug. 24.

Coates' risk may be justified, because "Rare Area" is a show that can appeal to almost anyone.

Coates is an illusionist of the first order. He has taken the light-show of the '60s and turned it into an '80s bridge between MTV and the avant-garde. As substantive art, "Rare Area" comes closer to high-tech-mind-candy, but as a visual trip, it's a definite "E" ticket ride. Coates and his cast of singers, actors, dancers, musicians and technicians have brought the slide show to the outer limits.

At its best, "Rare Area" provides moments of pure visual magic. Juxtaposition is the name of the game, as characters seem to float in and out of imaginary projected environments of architecture and cosmology. Mayan temples, sky-scrapers and nightmare rooms appear and transform in a dream-like manner.

Elements of opera, rock, mime, and spoken monolog are blended into the world of the projections. Simple objects like balloons and long rods take on magical properties as they are transformed by the projected light.

But it's all soft: Soft opera, soft social commentary, soft dance. There really isn't a challenging, provocative idea to be found.

Whatever claim "Rare Area" may make to contemporary social observation, it never exceeds the most superficial level of insight: a cowboy-hated, beer-drinking redneck spouts "Saturday Night Live"-style commentary as a string of pop-culture images flash by on his massive tv screen; an assassin tries repeatedly to shoot a puppet-President, who is just as manipulation of his Evitaesque wife — or is it Nancy Reagan?

"Rare Area" is at its best when it is about illusion, when it takes the audience into an "Alice In Wonderland" world, where up is down and flat is round.

The cast includes two singers. Tuesday it was John Duykers and Kathryn Neal; an actor, Sean Kilcoyne, and mime Hitomi Ikuma. The lenghty bubble-gum opera score is by Marc Ream, a sort of Yma Sumac goes electric. There are, however, some nice harp and saxophone solos by Barbara Imhoff and Larry Schneider.

Although Coates is credited as principal director, there are a multitude of other key figures: Jerome Serlin, set design and scenic projections; Jeff Hunt, lighting projection design; Larry Neff, overhead lighting and technical director, and Cynthia Du Val, costumes. Charles Rose is the producer.

One note for prospective viewers: sitting further back is advantageous for optimum visual effect — otherwise one tends to see the "strings of the marionettes." *Farb.*

DRAMA-LOGUE

August 14-20, 1986

Rare Area

BY POLLY WARFIELD

Produced by George Rose for George Coates Performance Works; James A. Doolittle Theatre, 1615 N. Vine St., Hollywood; (213) 462-6666. Opened Aug. 5; plays Wed.-Thurs., 8; Fri.-Sat., 8 & 10; Sun., 3 & 8; ends Aug. 24.

Welcome to magic time. Enter without fear into this strange new rare area where you'll find yourself on your own, quite possibly bewildered, but certainly teased, tantalized and regaled.

Rare Area is the newest creation of George Coates, joining his Berkeley-bred *How* trilogy, *Seehear, The Way of How* and *are are*. With it Coates strengthens his bid to be deemed the Picasso of Performance Art—the Dali, de Chirico, Magritte as well. And with it, Coates brings new meaning to the term impresario, new dimension to drama, new experience to theatregoers who come to be baffled, astonished, intrigued or delighted as the case may be, perhaps all of the above.

Rare Area's appeal is not directly to heart or mind but rather to the imagination, senses of sight and hearing, and extrasensory sensitivities of the psyche. In constant fluid flow and flux, projected images of light and shade, color, texture and shape shift and change in a dreamscape of eerie beauty, the environment for four archetypal figures.

Soprano Kathryn Neal and tenor John Duykers are elegant symbols of prestige and authority, refinement and civilization. They change their costumes often and evoke echoes of grandeur. They sing songs with no words. (These roles are filled alternately by sopranos Fabienne and Kathy Knight and tenor White Eagle.) Actor Sean Kilcoyne first appears as a shuffling, sly, ingratiating comic bumpkin and, in shades and 10-gallon hat, becomes menace, threat, brute bearing cruel teeth in a broad grin. Yet somehow funny. He talks in meaningfully meaningless words: "Together, there's nothing we can do," "Let's have no mercy before its time." Ludicrously impotent in macho rage, his flailing fists become affixed to huge balloons; it should happen to all sinister assassins.

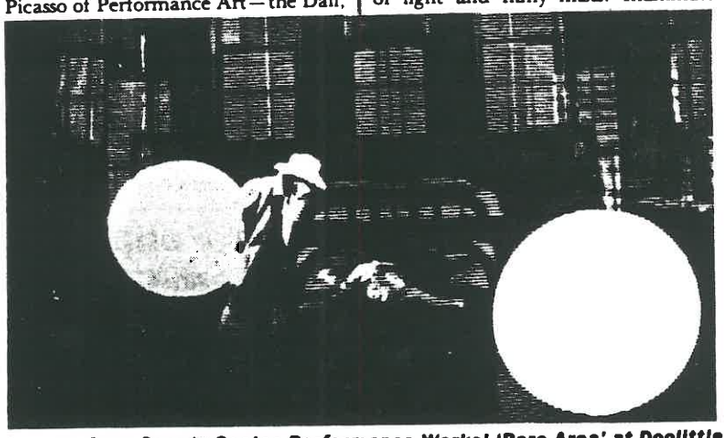
Movement artist/mime Hitomi Ikuma appears and disappears ectoplasmically as a grace-giving presence with healing powers, imagination incarnate. She delivers in Japanese a little speech of fierce impact. Another time she evolves from a shapeless blob of protoplasm into a rubbery parachutist flailing dangerously and with a sense of great urgency against an imposing architectural facade.

The talented performers perform their tasks in difficult (impossible?) circumstances: the upended tenor sings while sliding headfirst down a slippery slope; tenor beams beatifically while vocalizing, soprano soars trillingly as both lounge in huge puffy calla lilies. They're all jolly good sports and all underpinned by discipline with the tensile strength of tempered steel.

Direction is by George Coates with music by Marc Ream; set design and scenic projections by Jerome Sirlin; lighting projection design, Jeff Hunt; costume design, Cynthia DuVal. The fine musicians are Larry Schneider, Chris Halaby, Jamie Robertson, Barbara Imhoff, Eric Muhler and Jarell Irvin. Musical sound is magnificent. A background beat builds to dramatic intensity. Ululating syncopated pure patterns of sound weave a seamless tapestry and meld with shifting shapes and patterns, spheres and stairs and stars, as figures dissolve into spangles of light and filmy mists. Inanimate becomes animate. Nothing stays the same.

Beyond sophistication into a kind of inspired innocence, *Rare Area* and its rare denizens amount to transformations, evocations, invocations. It's not about words at all, not about ideas. The meaning is not the message. Not just spontaneous happening, it is art in adventure, adventure in art. There is dazzle in it and it's the damnedest dream you ever had. It's—

Well, look. Go see for yourself. *Rare Area* is gorgeous, a knockout.



A scene from George Coates Performance Works' 'Rare Area' at Doolittle